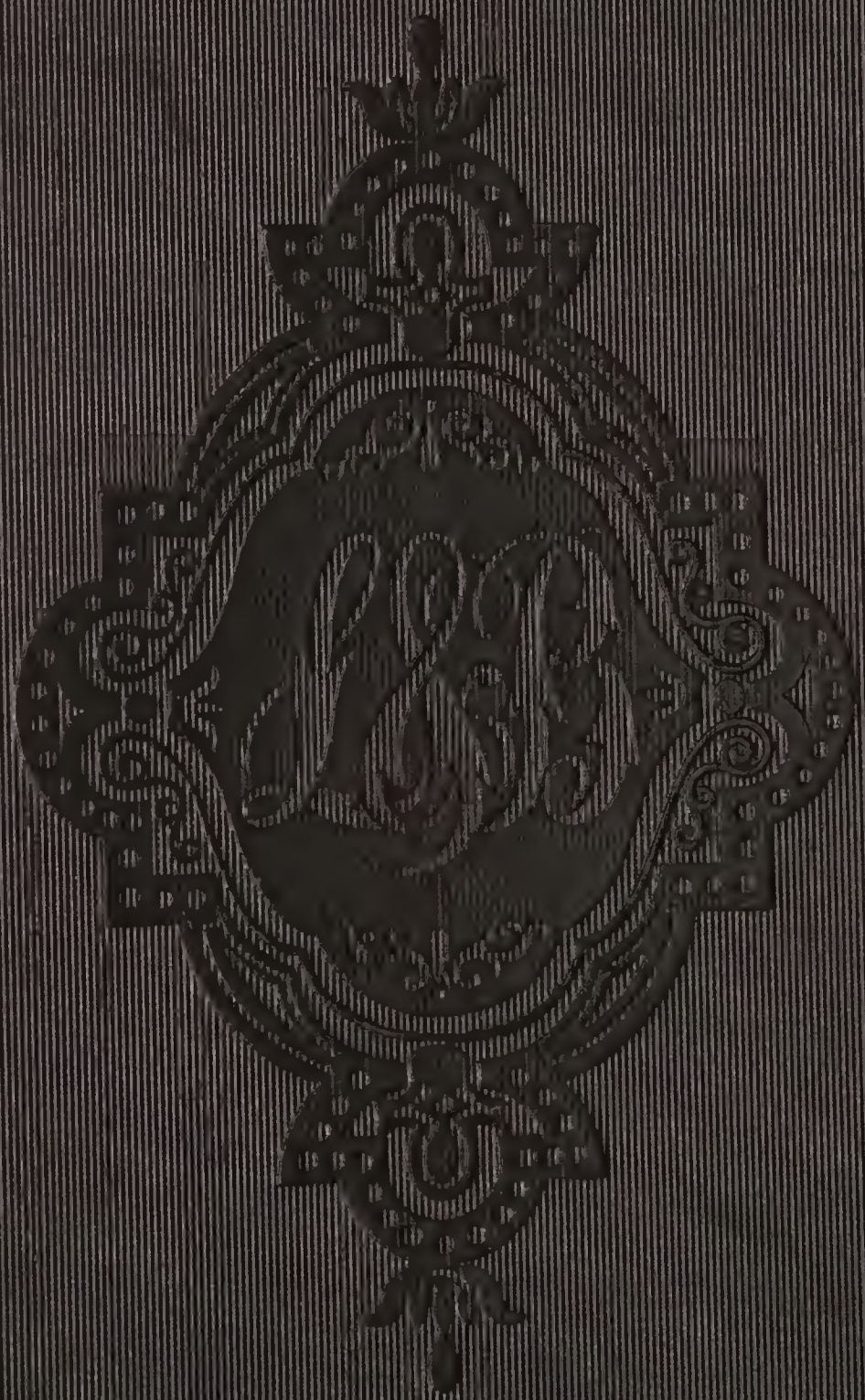

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

[SMITHSONIAN DEPOSIT.]

Chap. BT382

Shelf .W5

copy 2

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

LINDSAY & BLAKISTON'S PUBLICATIONS,

The Rev. John Cumming's Works.

UNIFORM EDITION.

Price 75 cents per Volume, and sent by mail, free of postage, upon receipt of this amount by the Publishers.

CUMMING'S APOCALYPTIC SKETCHES;
OR, LECTURES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION.
One Volume, 12mo. Cloth.

CUMMING'S APOCALYPTIC SKETCHES.
SECOND SERIES. One Volume, 12mo. Cloth.

CUMMING'S LECTURES ON THE SEVEN CHURCHES.
One Volume, 12mo. Cloth.

CUMMING'S LECTURES ON OUR LORD'S MIRACLES.
One Volume, 12mo. Cloth.

CUMMING'S LECTURES ON THE PARABLES.
One Volume. 12mo. Cloth.

CUMMING'S PROPHETIC STUDIES;
OR, LECTURES ON THE BOOK OF DANIEL.
One Volume, 12mo. Cloth.

CUMMING'S MINOR WORKS. First Series.
One Volume, 12mo. Cloth. This Volume contains the following:
THE FINGER OF GOD, CHRIST OUR PASSOVER, THE COMFORTER.
Which are all bound and sold separately. Price 38 cents.

CUMMING'S MINOR WORKS. Second Series.
One Volume, 12mo. Cloth. This Volume contains the following:
A MESSAGE FROM GOD, THE GREAT SACRIFICE, AND CHRIST RECEIVING SINNERS.
Which are also bound and sold separately. Price 38 cents.

CUMMING'S MINOR WORKS. Third Series.
One Volume, 12mo. Cloth. This volume contains the following:
INFANT SALVATION, THE BAPTISMAL FONT, AND THE COMMUNION TABLE.
Which are all bound and sold separately. Price 38 cents.

The Rev. John Cumming, D.D., is now the great pulpit orator of London, as Edward Irving was some twenty years since. His great work on the "Apocalypse," upon which his high reputation as a writer rests, has already reached its twentieth edition in England; while his "Lectures on the Miracles," and those on "Daniel," have passed through many editions of 1000 copies each and his "Lectures on the Parables" through four editions, all within a comparatively short time

The Rev. John Cumming's Works.

UNIFORM EDITION. PRICE 75 CENTS PER VOLUME.

CUMMING'S FAMILY PRAYERS,

FOR EVERY MORNING AND EVENING IN THE YEAR.

With References to appropriate Scripture Readings.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

JANUARY TO JUNE—JULY TO DECEMBER.

URGENT QUESTIONS.

TWELVE URGENT QUESTIONS, PERSONAL, PRACTICAL, AND POINTED.

In one 12mo. volume, cloth.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES:

OR,

THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

In one 12mo. volume, cloth.

CUMMING'S MINOR WORKS.

Price 38 cents per Volume.

THE COMMUNICANT'S MANUAL,
A Plain and Practical Exposition of the Lord's Supper. 1 vol., cloth.

INFANT SALVATION,
Or, All Saved that Die in Infancy. Specially addressed to mothers mourning the loss of infants and children. 1 vol., cloth.

THE BAPTISMAL FONT,
Or, the Nature and Obligations of Christian Baptism. 1 vol., cloth.

CHRIST OUR PASSOVER,
Or, Thoughts on the Atonement. 1 vol., cloth.

A MESSAGE FROM GOD,
Or, Thoughts on Religion for Thinking Men. 1 vol., cloth.

THE GREAT SACRIFICE,
Or, the Gospel according to Leviticus. 1 vol., cloth.

THE COMFORTER,
Or, Thoughts on the Influence of the Holy Spirit. 1 vol., cloth.

CHRIST RECEIVING SINNERS.
One vol., cloth.

The FINGER of GOD, in Creation, The Spread of Christianity, &c
One vol., cloth.

WHO ARE THE BLESSED?

OR,

Meditations

ON THE

BEATITUDES.

5800.

PHILADELPHIA:
LINDSAY & BLAKISTON.
1856.

D
Copy 2

BT382
W5
copy 2

Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1856, by

LINDSAY & BLAKISTON,

in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

STEREOTYPED BY J. FAGAN. PRINTED BY C. SHERMAN & SON.

ABT7 May 35

PREFACE.

THE substance of these "Meditations" has been presented by the Author to his people, in the house of God. He has found instruction and edification in meditating upon this blessed "Sermon on the Mount," and has ever regarded the opening portion as peculiarly adapted to convey instruction, in reference to the "Rise and Progress of Religion" in the soul. He believes, that these simple explanations and exhortations have been kindly received by the people to whom he ministers in holy things; and he now commits them to the world, with the hope and prayer, that they may not only revive pleasant and profitable reflections, in the minds of those who have heard them before, but that they may be instrumental in doing some good, in the hands of others who may have the desire and patience to peruse them.

The best commentators have been consulted; and the Author particularly acknowledges his great indebt-

edness to Dr. Tholuck's work on the Sermon on the Mount, — and to Stier's Discourses of Jesus. He has not attempted to write a book for theologians; but one of a plain, practical, and, he trusts, edifying character, for the general reader. Praying for God's blessing upon this humble contribution to religious literature, he hopes that some at least may find that profit in its perusal, which he found in its preparation.

THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS.

Page

INTRODUCTION 13

CHAPTER I.

THE POOR IN SPIRIT.—Matth. v. 30 25

CHAPTER II.

THE MOURNERS.—Matth. v. 4 45

CHAPTER III.

THE MEEK.—Matth. v. 5 64

CHAPTER IV.

THE HUNGRY AND THIRSTY.—Matth. v. 6 83

CHAPTER V.

The Merciful.—Matth. v. 7 106

CHAPTER VI.

The Pure in Heart.—Matth. v. 8 127

CHAPTER VII.

The Peace-makers —Matth. v. 9 149

CHAPTER VIII.

The Persecuted.—Matth. v. 10–12 170

Conclusion 197

INTRODUCTION.

"And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying—" MATTH., v. 1, 2.

THE Lord Jesus had entered upon his public ministry. He had departed into Galilee, "and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea-coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up." He "began to preach, and to say," like John the Baptist, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

He did not confine himself to Capernaum, and to the sea-coast where he found some of his disciples, but went forth into the surrounding country. "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom." But he did not merely preach, he also healed "all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people."

"And his fame went throughout all Syria." Multitudes surrounded him whenever he paused in his journeys, and also accompanied him upon the road. They came to hear, and to be healed of their diseases. "They brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them." At such times "the whole multitude sought to touch him, for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all."

At the time of the event, with which we are concerned in these pages, he was perhaps just returning to Capernaum, from one of his excursions into the northern parts of the country. He was followed by "great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan." Some had even come "from the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon." The gospels inform us, that such multitudes were frequently in the habit of remaining in his company for several days, spending the nights in the open air, which could easily be done beneath the bright warm sky of Palestine. In the 15th chapter of Matthew, we read: "Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat, and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way."

It is probable, that he and the people spent another night in the open air, before entering Capernaum. The

disciples and the multitudes encamped upon a plain; while the Savior ascended a mountain, "and continued all night in prayer to God." "And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named Apostles." Beholding the multitudes, and desiring to improve the opportunity, to communicate to them, as well as the chosen apostles, the great principles of the kingdom of God, in an extended discourse, he descended from the eminence, towards the place where the people were assembled; "and when he was set, his disciples came unto him, and he opened his mouth, and taught them."

The locality of the "mountain" upon which this celebrated sermon was delivered, has for ages been a disputed question. The difficulty has been increased, because Luke informs us, chap. vi., that when Christ uttered these words, he stood in a "plain." This difficulty has been disposed of by some, by regarding this "plain" as a level, open field, upon a mountain ridge; and that a still higher part of the mountain rose from this plain. While the multitudes remained in the "plain" during the night, Christ retired to this eminence, to pray alone. It seems necessary to look in the neighborhood of Capernaum for the scene of this event. And the "Mount of Beatitudes," as it was called by geographers and travellers of former times, in accordance with the tradition of the Latin Church, seems to agree with the different particulars mentioned by the two evangelists.

But, whatever mountain in the vicinity of Capernaum, may be supposed to be the real "Mount of Beati-

tudes," we are authorized to regard the Savior as standing upon an elevated plain, from which the eye could take in the charming panorama of the country around the beautiful sea of Galilee. Travellers agree in comparing the mountain scenery of Galilee to the most beautiful of their native lands. The Swedish traveller, Hasselquist, compares it to East Gothland; the Englishman, Clarke, to the romantic valleys of Kent and Surrey; and Seezen, to the vicinity of the Lake of Locarno. Josephus even grows eloquent in his description of this region. In his "War of the Jews," Book iii., chap. 10, § 8, he says, "The country also, that lies over against this lake, hath the same name of Gennesareth; its nature is wonderful, as well as its beauty,—its soil is so fruitful that all sorts of trees can grow upon it." There grow walnuts, palm-trees, figs and olives. "One may call this place the ambition of nature," &c., &c. The traveller, Korte, tells us, that the prospect from the "Kurun Hattin" (the mount of Beatitudes) is similar to that from Mount Tabor; although he also agrees with Robinson, in declaring the view from Tabor the most beautiful. From its western part, according to Robinson, the eye ranges over the valley to the north of Tabor, and the Ardel Hamma, the latter being spread out, like a carpet, beneath the feet of the beholder. On the other side, may be seen the northern part of the sea of Galilee, the plain of Gennesareth on its western shore, to the north and north-west, Safed, and several villages upon the heights. From this place Pococke saw the peak of woody *Carmel;* and Brocardus and

Baron Solms tell us, that Hermon and Lebanon are visible in the distance.

Such was the spot upon which the Saviour preached the memorable Sermon, the opening words of which, we purpose to consider. When we contemplate the extensive and charming prospect; the lovely, cloudless sky of the Holy Land; the beauty and freshness of the morning, when the glorious sun was reflected by the waters of the lake, and thousands of glittering drops of dew; the vast multitude assembled in the plain, around the elevation upon which the Savior sat; and the form and countenance of Him upon whom every eye was riveted, — we have a scene, such as the world never witnessed before—nor since.

The multitudes had longed for the morning. The sun at last arose in majesty, and gladdened every heart. But now, upon the mountain, in sight of all, appeared one, whose presence had been desired still more fervently. He too was a Sun, the sun of righteousness; a light — "that sure light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." During the silent watches of the night, he had communed with his Father, and the invisible world,—now he descends to commune with man. Never did preacher address men in a fairer or sublimer temple. The everlasting Father himself had arched the dome which covered the vast audience; and the floor upon which they stood seemed to raise them above the sinful, busy world beneath. As Moses, far above the camp of the Israelites, was permitted to speak with God, in the mount, so these favored children of Abraham had

ascended above their fellows, and IMMANUEL himself condescended to become their teacher.

There stood the herald of a new kingdom: "the kingdom of God,—of heaven;" yea, here was the King in person. No throne was placed upon that mountain side; no canopy of royal purple and gold waved over his head; no glittering guards surrounded him; there was neither crown, nor royal robe, nor sceptre. He was clothed like other men; but spoke and looked as one having authority. A few fishermen were the only courtiers that guarded his person. His throne was the ground on which he sat.

As he gazed upon the multitudes, he seated himself, according to the custom of the Jews, when about to teach; and his disciples came to him, forming an unpretending, but interesting group about him.

A deep silence pervaded the great congregation. When they saw him seated, and the disciples gathered around him, and his eyes ranging over the multitude, they knew that he was about to speak. Every eye was fixed upon those heavenly lips, and every ear eagerly bent forward to catch the first word.

The Evangelist proceeds to tell us, "and he opened his mouth." How many have passed over this expression, as one of little importance or meaning. To them it was nothing but a superfluous and awkward addition. What need of such minuteness? Yet, doubtless, Matthew wrote these words, because they describe a part of a scene, whose every change was of moment in his eyes. They serve to impress the reader with the importance of the occasion. It was a moment of in-

tense expectation — of attentive awe. This discourse was an event in the Savior's life. It seemed like the monarch's first formal proclamation of the principles which shall govern his actions. Every movement, every look is significant. "He opened his mouth, and taught them!" Clear, loud, distinct and musical were the tones of his voice. There was no hesitation, no faintness in his utterance. The very manner in which he opened his mouth was authoritative, and the tones of his voice worthy of the Son of Man. He could be easily heard by the entire audience. He had spoken to the people before, but never in such a manner. We cannot believe that these words are insignificant. There is poetic beauty in thus introducing us to the first words of the sermon.

And what was the first word that passed his lips? It was "*Blessed!*" He did not open with an apology, or rebuke, or denunciation against his opponents. In sweet harmony with the lovely morning, the smiling face of nature around, and his own benignant countenance, he begins by speaking gentle words of encouragement and blessing. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven!" And scarcely have these gospel sounds fallen upon the ears and hearts of the people, when they are followed by another Beatitude: "Blessed are they that mourn." And thus he advances step by step, uttering words that were doubtless paradoxical, but which must have fallen like precious balm upon many hearts, whilst they confounded the wily and carnal Pharisees and Scribes. Blessed are the meek, those that hunger and thirst

after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peace-makers, and those that are persecuted for righteousness' sake. Sentence after sentence, truth upon truth, warnings and encouragements succeed each other, in beautiful and perfect order, and chain the disciples and the multitudes in breathless attention. When he closed this matchless discourse, we are told, what we should have expected—"the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

While we thus stand, in spirit, in the midst of the multitude upon the Mount of Beatitudes, we cannot help thinking of another mountain, of still more ancient days. We remember Sinai, in the land of Arabia. We remember the solemn announcement once made to Moses: "Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people, upon Mount Sinai." We again see "the bounds round about," to prevent the people from ascending, or even touching the mountain. We listen to the awful threat—"whosoever toucheth the mount, shall be surely put to death." Then on the third day, in the *morning* too, "there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud npon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet, exceeding loud; so that all the people in the camp trembled." "And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp, to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the

Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly."—"And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off."

Mark the contrast between the mount of the old covenant, and that of the new. Everything is full of meaning. The one a rugged peak, in a dreary wilderness; the other a gentle eminence, in the midst of the smiling garden of the world. The one shrouded in darkness, fearfully illuminated by blinding flashes of lightning, — the other smiling in the morning sun, and sparkling with thousands of dew-drops; — the one an awe-inspiring scene of power, holiness, and righteousness, — the other of mildness and compassionate love; — on the former, God the Father, in all his overwhelming attributes, — on the latter, the Son, the God-man, full of sympathy for poor fallen humanity;—the former unapproachable by the people—from which they shrink back, even from the permitted spot, afraid of the voice; — in the latter, they are permitted to touch Immanuel's garments, — they cannot approach too closely, and listen with eager ears, glistening eyes, and beating hearts, to the words of "the kingdom!" Yes! in view of these two mountains, we feel, that "the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Sinai is indeed a symbol of the law, and the mountain of Beatitudes of the gospel. Here we begin to realize the import of the words in the epistle to the Hebrews: "For ye are

not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire; nor unto blackness and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice, they that heard, entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, and if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake.") But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

He is indeed the mediator of the new covenant, and he opens his mouth, to proclaim the gracious terms of this covenant. The kingdom of heaven was truly at hand; and the king himself describes the nature of that kingdom, and the character of its subjects. These he pronounces blessed, and while thus pronouncing, describes their inner and outer life. These alone are the blessed, in time and eternity. The king stands upon the mount, and proclaims to the multitudes before him, and to the unborn multitudes of future ages—*who* shall become the heirs of the kingdom of heaven,—the favored sons of God.

Do you ask, beloved reader, who are these blessed

ones? Listen to the answer given in these eight Beatitudes. Who are the blessed? Christ replies, "the poor in spirit," "the mourners," "the meek," "the hungry and thirsty," "the merciful," "the pure in heart," "the peace-makers," and "the persecuted for righteousness' sake."

Would you know "what manner of men" these are, and whether you belong to their number? If so, let us proceed together, uttering the prayer: "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us!" Amen.

WHO ARE THE BLESSED?

CHAPTER I.

The Poor in Spirit.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."—Matth., chap. v. 30.

When the Lord Jesus entered the synagogue of Nazareth, on the sabbath, and stood up for to read, he opened the book, and found the place where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." When he had closed the book, and every eye was fixed upon him, he said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." He had indeed come into the world, to preach the "gospel to the *poor*."

When John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to him, with the question: "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Jesus not only

directed their attention to the amazing miracles wrought before their eyes, but also to another, and not the least evidence of his Messiaship, "*the poor have the gospel preached to them!*"

Luke also, in his account of this sermon, tells us, that Jesus uttered the beatitude in this form: "Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God."

For these reasons, many have thought, that the Savior intended this blessing for those who are poor in the things of this world; and some have even been led to endeavor to establish this opinion, by changing the relation of the words in the original text, so that we should read, "Blessed in their spirit are the poor."

It is true, that Christ has said, "that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven;" and, that "it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." It is true, that wealth is productive of many cares and temptations, and that it tends to chain the thoughts and affections to the earth; and that poverty may exempt from this, and teach men to seek help and wealth in God, and the things of God. But can we for a moment suppose, that the Saviour, notwithstanding all his love for the poor, and his labors in their midst, would exclude all the rich, simply because they were rich? Were not Job, Abraham, and David rich? Did Christ commiserate the young ruler, because he was rich, or because his heart was bound to his riches? Is the gospel message to the rich, an injunction to cast away their wealth? Is it not rather, "that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in

the living God, — that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate?" Are all the bodily poor really blessed in the present possession and enjoyment of the kingdom of God? Facts around us prove the contrary. Poverty is neither a certain passport to the kingdom of glory to come, nor a certain evidence of true membership of the kingdom of grace here. All the rich shall not, hereafter, lift up their eyes in hell; all the poor shall not rest in Abraham's bosom. Many of the former will be received into everlasting habitations; while many of the latter will be cast into outer darkness; for "from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him." We cannot therefore believe, that this beatitude is intended for those who are poor in this world's goods, merely as such.

Others adhere to the words as we find them recorded in our English Bible, without attempting to connect the words, "blessed," and "in spirit." They too agree with us, in rejecting an exclusive application to those who are born and live in poverty. They find a deep meaning in the word *spirit*. Blessed are the poor "in spirit,"— that is, men who become poor by their *own will*, by a voluntary resolution of their own minds and hearts. They are not naturally poor; they become so voluntarily, and deny themselves the use and enjoyment of the rich gifts which they have inherited or gained. Many of the ancients interpreted thus. The Church of Rome delights in such an exposition, and couples with it another declaration of the Master: "if thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou

hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." Upon these she bases a principle of the utmost importance, — which has sent forth armies of hermits, monks and nuns. How many of her communion have sought the kingdom of heaven by such voluntary poverty, thinking thus to become poor in spirit; as if the mere removal of outward possessions would necessarily produce a change of heart, and bestow upon the hermit or monk that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord! Who does not feel that such an interpretation is even more repugnant to the words of the Lord, than the former?

Another one explains: by the "poor in spirit" we are to understand those who, though they are *rich*, do not place their trust in these things, but are poor in their minds, notwithstanding all their wealth. They are not proud of their wealth; and although outwardly abounding in these things, in their "spirit" they are poor men. They answer to the description of the Apostle: they "have as though they had none." They practise the word of the apostle James: "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: but the rich, in that he is made low." They do what Jeremiah advises: "Let not the rich man glory in his riches;" or, as David says: "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them." We may say of all such, Blessed are they; but we cannot apply to them the beatitude with which the Sermon on the Mount opens. All this restricts us to poverty in earthly possessions, or our feelings in reference to them.

Doubtless, this anxiety to explain this beatitude of

bodily poverty, has arisen from a desire to reconcile it with the clear word of prophecy; the outward circumstances of the Saviour; his personal poverty, and association with the poor; but principally to reconcile the language of Matthew with that of Luke. Yet, although Luke says: "Blessed be ye *poor*," this does not by any means force us to explain it of the bodily poor. When, a few verses afterwards, he proceeds to say: "Blessed are ye that hunger now; for ye shall be filled," is it natural or reasonable for us to think of mere bodily hunger, and bodily satisfaction? Undoubtedly he refers to that hunger and thirst *after righteousness*, which Matthew speaks of. When, therefore, he speaks of the *poor*, we find the same right and necessity to think of — not the poor in earthly things, but the "poor in spirit."

As we cannot, therefore, satisfy ourselves with thinking that the Savior pronounces this blessing upon bodily poverty, we are obliged to conclude, that he means spiritual poverty. And this undoubtedly, is the very first meaning which would suggest itself to every thoughtful reader of the Bible. The great teacher before us is the Herald of a spiritual kingdom; and his doctrines are spiritual. Though he is the friend of the poor, and is not ashamed of their company, and takes delight in doing what proud Pharisees shrink from, — he cannot mean to begin this great exposition of the principles of his kingdom, by declaring all the bodily poor the blessed possessors of the kingdom of God. Besides this, we are obliged to seek a spiritual sense in the very first beatitude, because this spiritual

sense is undeniable in the succeeding ones; and we believe, and shall endeavor to show, that there is an intimate connection between all of them, and a gradual ascent from the first to the last. If the Savior, in this ascent, leads us to *purity of heart*, he cannot begin with poverty in earthly possessions; — this must refer to the spiritual condition of man.

But when we turn to this side, we shall find a difference of interpretation here also. Some will tell us that by the word "spirit" we are to understand that, which the persons spoken of, possess very little. The interpreters, St. Augustine, Erasmus and Zuingle, understand the word "spirit" in a bad sense, of "pride," "independence," of "wilful self-conceit," &c. They would therefore read: "Blessed are those who are poor 'in pride,' 'poor in a lofty spirit,' who are humble and modest." Though we are willing to give all praise to such humility and modesty, we think the Savior means more than all this.

Others again, have with good reason objected to this, that we are not in the habit of speaking of *poverty* in reference to an evil thing. We generally connect poverty with something good and desirable. It is unnatural to say poor "in pride," "in a wilful, boastful spirit." And we are told, the word spirit refers to a possession which the children of the earth value highly, but which Christ regards in its true light. Therefore, we should read: "Blessed are those who are poor "in genius," or "learning," or "spirit," in the world's sense.

Or shall we suppose that the Savior here alludes to

the Holy Spirit, and pronounces a blessing upon men possessed of few spiritual gifts, and of little experience of the fruits of the Spirit? Does he mean to say, "Blessed are those, who in their hearts know little of the Spirit; little of 'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance?'" What a pillow of ease this passage would prove to millions of sinners, if this were its meaning! How many, then and now, could have applied it to themselves! They might say, "We know little or nothing of the working of the Spirit; we do not live in the Spirit; we are emphatically poor in this possession." Can we believe this to be the Savior's meaning? Would it not be as if he had said: "Blessed are the worldly-minded; those without repentance and faith; those who have no trace of holiness: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven!" Who dares place such words upon Christ's lips? Who will venture thus to misinterpret the first beatitude?

All these interpretations err, by regarding the word "spirit" as expressing the object, which we are not to possess. The true method appears to be, to explain the word "spirit" of *that, in* which man becomes conscious that he is poor; in other words, the *spirit of man*, in which he sees fully and clearly, that he is *poor*. Blessed the men, who in their own spirit or mind, are poor! Poor in what? To know that I am a beggar, does not require a peculiar exercise of mind or spirit. Bodily poverty is seen by the bodily eye. Blessed is the man, who in his spirit sees that he is *poor in the sight of God—poor in*

those possessions which are needful for peace here, and bliss hereafter. These, we may remark at once, are essentially a different class from the one mentioned before! The former see that they are without spirit; but this discovery gives them no concern. They glory in their shame. These latter persons see in their spirit, that they are poor in the sight of God; but instead of regarding it with complacency, it leads them to shame and sorrow. But of this — more in the next beatitude.

Well did the Savior know, why he pronounced these blessed; and why he thus opened his discourse. He here announces one of the fundamental principles of the Gospel. He here places before all men, the very Alpha of the whole system of Christianity. He is surrounded by many of the earthly poor, to whom he preaches the gospel. It is his merciful condescension that calls them; it is their exalted privilege to hear this gospel. He begins his great sermon by declaring the poor blessed; but this class of "poor" may include the richest and poorest, the wisest and most ignorant of hearers; for among all classes of men he seeks those, who in their own spirit are poor in God's sight.

"Know thyself!" was an instructive admonition, familiar to the ancients, many of whom regarded it as the most difficult of studies. Man is but too often better acquainted with his fellow men, than with himself, — just as many are more familiar with foreign lands, than with their own. He is too much engaged in studying the great world around him, while he

forgets the small, busy, and important world within. He is satisfied that he knows himself, and casts but a few superficial glances into his own heart. He believes that he knows his heart, forgetting the fact, so finely expressed in the language of scripture: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Mind and heart conspire to flatter us. The natural man is proud, and satisfied with himself. He says: "I am rich, and increased with goods; and have need of nothing." In his own estimation, he is rich in mental acquirements, abundant in good works, well-pleasing to a just and discerning God; and in want of nothing. He is not poor, but rich. He is not sick — in need of a physician, but in the enjoyment of most excellent health. He is not lost, but at home; in no danger, but perfectly safe. To such, we might say, with Paul to the Corinthians: "Now ye are full, now ye are rich; ye have reigned as kings, — ye are strong, ye are honorable!" With the Pharisee in the temple, they are ready to thank God, that they are not as other men are. They peruse the heart-searching pages of God's holy book, but do not apply these things to themselves. They listen to the most earnest admonitions of the pulpit, but these seem not to affect them. Such men have eyes, and yet do not see; ears, and hear not. They are spiritually blind, and dwell in darkness, greater and more terrible than that of Egypt. Possessed of worldly wisdom, and the learning of the schools, they are yet wholly ignorant of their true spiritual condition. Boldly they walk through life,

and approach the grave. They rely upon the unquestioned mercy of God, and their own righteousuess. Like the prodigal son, they waste their goods in riotous living; and although they have at last spent all, and a mighty famine has arisen, and they actually begin to suffer, they do not seem to appreciate their emptiness and poverty.

The natural man, in his self-conceit, is like the miserable beggar, who is seized, in a moment of intoxication, to become the sport of the king's servants. When he awakes, he finds himself in a magnificent bed in a royal apartment, surrounded by slaves ready to obey the slightest of his wishes. He revels in this dreamy delight, and begins to believe in it as a reality. Thus the natural man but too often imagines himself the monarch of all around him, the offspring of God, and the certain heir of heaven, — unconscious the while, that in reality, and in the sight of that God who searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins, he is a poor sin-intoxicated being, who has no comeliness whatever; and who, unless a radical change takes place in his character, must at last be aroused with dismay from his intoxication, to be forever an outcast from the presence of God. The poor lunatic may think himself a monarch and hero, while to others he is nothing more than an object of fear or pity. So is every one who lives without God in the world.

"Thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." What can be done with a man under such circumstances? What is the first thing needful? Is it not, that he

should know himself? — that he should be redeemed from his miserable self-deception? Must not the poor invalid, covered from the top of his head to the sole of his foot, with the loathsome disease, first of all be made aware of his diseased and terrible condition? Must not his ignorance and foolishness be brought home to his mind in the most impressive manner? It is indeed the very first step — the very opening of the Gospel kingdom — the first demand of the Savior. Christ knows, and all his disciples know, that these men are poor — miserably poor, in mind, heart, and life; but what does all this avail, unless these persons are taught to see it themselves?

Blessed the man who sees his poverty! By some interposition of Providence; by a living minister; or the word of God approaching him in some way, — a ray of light falls upon his darkness — a magic wand touches his palsied limbs. He is awakened — aroused from the delirium of sin. He begins to see things in their true light. He discovers that all he rejoiced in before was darkness and vanity. He has been gathering precious stones, and his heart was puffed up with the thought of his extraordinary wealth. But now he brings them to the light, and to his dismay, discovers that they are merely pebbles. He thought that he was clothed like a king, in garments of gold; but now he is led to a truthful mirror, which reveals his nakedness. Formerly he boasted of his extraordinary knowledge; but now he perceives that he has not even learned the alphabet of true knowledge. He imagined himself upon the highest peak of perfection; but now,

that the breath of God has driven away the mists which deceived his eyes, he beholds heights towering above him, which he never dreamed of. He always relied upon his excellent life; but now he sees its manifold defects, numerous transgressions, and omissions of duty. Hitherto he relied upon the perfect character of his good works; but as he permits this new light to fall upon them, and applies the touchstone of divine truth, he discovers their imperfection and insufficiency. He begins to read his heart, taught by Him "who searcheth the heart," and finds that it has been an arch-deceiver. He examines his motives, and finds them tainted by the grossest selfishness and worldliness. In short, like the prodigal son, when meditating in the midst of the swine, "he comes to himself." He was beside himself, hitherto, — he was a maniac! Now he is himself, — for the first time, has he become acquainted with himself. Who, we would ask, has ever yet come to himself, without making the discovery that this "self," so highly prized and exalted, was after all poor and degraded? If any one professes to know himself, without having found this, we may say to such an one, that his "heart, deceitful above all things," is still leading him astray. Many a man, under the influence of God's truth, may cast a momentary glance into his heart; but like the lucid intervals of a delirium, it is soon over. He comes to himself—merely in order to hasten away from himself.

Not so the persons of whom the Savior here speaks. Theirs is not a momentary, passing, superficial knowledge. When the abyss is opened before their eyes,

they examine it long and well, though it causes them to shudder. They take in the height and depth of their misery and poverty. They look into the mirror, not for the purpose of forgetting straightway what manner of persons they are; but they wish to know the worst concerning themselves, in order that they may obtain help. They see with their eyes, and mind, and heart, that they are poor — poor in spiritual things. They examine their spiritual knowledge, and find themselves deplorably deficient in truth. They examine their will, and discover it to be deficient in holiness. They examine their feelings, and find they lack the experience of the blessedness of the people of God. They see "that they have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Their pride is gone. A little while ago, they were, in their own estimation, exalted to the heavens; now they grovel in the dust. They discover that while they have been busy and cumbered about many things, they do not possess the "one thing needful!" In the language of the Psalmist, they confess: "Mine iniquities are gone over my head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds stink, and are corrupt, because of my foolishness. There is no soundness in my flesh: but I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man, that openeth not his mouth."

But how does a man become poor in spirit! How may he arrive at this truthful knowledge of his own spiritual condition? Is it a work of man, and of the spirit of man alone? Does he come to himself merely by an exertion of his own will and mind? What do

the Scriptures say? "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light!"—"If ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord." The God, who, upon Elisha's prayer, opened the eyes of the servant of the man of God, that he could see the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha; the Savior who touched the blind, and restored them to sight; he who sent Ananias to Saul of Tarsus, that through his prayer and touch, it might immediately fall from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith;—he alone can restore the spiritually blind to sight. The spirit of God, by the word and providences of God, casts light into the mind and heart, and thus enables a man to know himself. It teaches the worldling to see this, as the first step in his conversion; and it teaches the disciple to see his poverty, as long as he lives.

How many, alas! dwell in the midst of Gospel light, but still continue in darkness! How many are poor, but the knowledge of it has not dawned upon their spirits! They reject God's light and mirror.

"Let there be light," Jehovah said;
And light o'er all the earth was spread:
Nature, arrayed in charms unknown;
Day with its new-born lustre shone.

He sees the mind, when lost it lies
In shades of ignorance and vice;
And darts from heaven a vivid ray,
And changes midnight into day.

Shine, mighty God, with vigor shine
On this benighted heart of mine;
There be thy brighter beams revealed,
As in the Savior's face beheld!

"BLESSED are the poor in spirit: FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN!"

The Savior pronounces such men "happy," "blessed." They would be considered happy, even by the ancient philosophers, who thought so highly of the "know thyself." Happy, indeed, is the man who knows his own mind and heart, and is no longer beside himself. Though this knowledge may present many exceedingly disagreeable facts, it is best to know the truth, and the whole truth. Self-deception is truly a miserable state. The sooner man escapes from it, the better! A day of beastly intoxication may serve to exalt the poor man above his poverty; but his sober hours, when he fully and sadly realizes his true condition, are certainly preferable to all that truthless delight. Man is only happy when living in *truth;* all falsehood militates against his true repose. "The truth shall make you free!" And Jesus prays: "Sanctify them through thy truth!" Happy, therefore, the man who finds the way to the realms of truth! Happy the man who drops the mask! Happy the man who knows himself, however humiliating that knowledge may be! Happy the man who sees his spiritual poverty and leprosy! According to the judgment of our own reason, we count such happy!

But the Savior informs us of the reason of this happiness—*theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* A kingdom

of God had been promised in the Old Testament. In Daniel viii., we read: "And there was given him (the Son of Man) dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, and nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away; and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." And, further on: "But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever — even for ever and ever." This kingdom of God, embracing time and eternity, should be established by the promised Messiah, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham. The Jews were expecting the advent of this kingdom. The Pharisees once demanded of Christ, "when the kingdom of God should come?" And there were many before, and during his life on the earth, who, like Joseph of Arimathea, "waited for the kingdom of God." Thus, the Lord already found a knowledge of, and desire for such a kingdom, among the Jews. But the ideas concerning it among the great mass of them were carnal and gross. They expected an earthly kingdom, surrounded by earthly pomp and power. They seemed to have lost sight of its spiritual and heavenly character, as portrayed in the Old Testament. Therefore, the honored herald of the New Covenant, the last of the prophets, who stood upon the threshold of the gospel dispensation, — John the Baptist, first uses the expression, "kingdom of heaven." The Savior afterwards used the same expression, although he also calls it the "kingdom of God." Sometimes in the Gospels, we find these terms

applied to a *present*, at other times to a *future*, kingdom. Some, therefore, explain the promise before us, as the possession of that kingdom of heaven which is yet to be revealed: when the Lord shall descend from the right hand of the Father, to judge the quick and the dead. Others refer it to the church of Christ upon earth, which was established by the Savior himself. Doubtless, however, we are to embrace both, and to understand this kingdom as beginning with Christ, and the establishment of his church, and embracing his reign in the world, and throughout eternity. It is not an earthly kingdom, but of "heaven." It originates in heaven; is manifested and developed upon earth; and finds a glorious completion in a new heaven, and new earth, through all eternity. The kingdom of God among the Israelites, was an outward kingdom, signifying and desiring inward and spiritual things. The "kingdom of heaven," though outward in some respects, is in the hearts of men; but is calculated, by its regenerating influence upon the heart and mind, to subject the individual, and the world of individuals, to the great King Christ. The king is a peculiar one, so also the kingdom. All is spiritual and eternal. It is something which is born in eternity; it is in the world, but not of it; filled here already with the spirit of heaven, it bestows its blessings as a foretaste of heaven, and finally gives them in endless abundance. Such is the kingdom of which Christ speaks. It embraces men on earth, and angels in heaven; time and eternity; the church militant, and triumphant.

And who shall enter into this kingdom, which, like the bow of promise, binds two worlds together? Listen to the words of its King! "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Those who are humble, who see their poverty, their spiritual poverty in the sight of God, possess the very first requisite of this kingdom. With all its royal blessings, its words of peace and comfort, it comes to those who feel themselves poor and unworthy. As long as a man is filled with self-conceit, and his own righteousness, the kingdom of heaven does not draw nigh unto him: for, let it be remembered, we do not *come* to the kingdom;—through God's mercy, it is *brought* to our doors! It is only when you cast aside your self-made covering of fig-leaves, and sink down, with an overwhelming sense of your utter poverty, that the kingdom of heaven is yours.

What a wonderful, yet cheering and inviting contrast! Poverty and a kingdom! Behold here the plan of salvation—the mystery of God! It is ever true: he that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. He that becomes utterly poor in his own estimation, shall be made rich: the kingdom of heaven; the privileges of the gospel—forgiveness, peace, joy, hope, faith, the

future, all — all shall be his. As the Lord walks through the earth, seeking disciples, he calls for those who feel themselves "weary and heavy laden." He is anxious to *give*, for to him it is indeed more blessed to give than to receive; but he *cannot*, as long as men think themselves rich, and in need of nothing. He bears in his hand "gold tried in the fire," "white raiment," and a precious sight-restoring "eye-salve;" but he can only give them, where there is confessed poverty, nakedness and blindness. He is a wonderful physician, going about "doing good;" but he cannot offer his precious medicine, until men feel themselves sick. Blessed, happy are the poor in spirit, for they possess the first thing needful. The kingdom of heaven is theirs. It comes to them as soon as they have this disposition, and remains with them as long as they have it. Observe, this is the gracious promise appended to the first beatitude; and it is also given at the close. To them, the kingdom of heaven comes at once, as soon as they see and feel their poverty. It is like that scene in the wilderness: — as soon as the Devil left the blessed Savior, angels approached him. Drive away spiritual pride and delusion, and this kingdom will come. And know you what it bears within itself? Mark! "comfort," "inheritance of the earth," "true satisfaction," "mercy," "the sight of God," and the "sonship of God!"

In the world, the proud, ambitious, and self-reliant man shall mount the throne. Here, the only way to rise is to lie in the dust. Those alone, who know how to be abased, shall reign with Christ.

Do you desire to become thus rich? Then begin at once to learn how poor you are. Do you see this? Has the Holy Spirit opened your eyes, so that you behold your nakedness, and not one thought, or word, or deed, in which you can glory? If so, blessed are you: the wicket-gate of the great kingdom opens before you; the King himself comes forth to meet you; the offers of pardon, and the unsearchable riches of Christ, are yours. All that you need is to see yourself as you are, and to feel what such a sight demands. Although the subject of our feelings in reference to this knowledge meets us only at our next step, we cannot close without referring to it. How many have *seen* their poverty, without permitting this *knowledge* to affect their hearts? May you *see*, and see to *mourn!*

Blessed are the humble souls who see
Their ignorance and poverty;
Treasures of grace to them are given,
And crowns of joy laid up in heaven.

CHAPTER II.

The Mourners.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."—Matth., v. 4.

What strange sayings fall from the lips of this Jesus of Nazareth! He begins a discourse before the high and low of his countrymen, by pronouncing a blessing upon the poor—the poor in spirit! How far more natural would it have been, to say: Blessed are the rich—the rich in spirit! He has opened his mouth, and the very first sentence is calculated not merely to surprise his hearers, but to give them food for long and serious reflection. But scarcely have their eager ears drunk in this strange saying, when it is followed by another, stranger still: "Blessed are they that *mourn!*" How can it enter the mind of man, to pronounce "the mourners" blessed? The mourners to be found in the vast multitude which surrounded the Lord, upon the Mount of Beatitudes, would scarcely be willing to assent to this declaration; and those, whose hearts and countenances had not as yet been touched by the hand of sorrow, would undoubtedly exclaim: "Blessed are we, who know not tears and afflictions, and have not yet put on the gar-

ments and mien of the mourner!" It is not natural to the world and the heart of man, to "glory in tribulation."

"Man that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble." "For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night." "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward." "The days of our years are threescore years and ten: and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow." Such are the declarations of the inspired word; and the experience of the human race proves the truthfulness of the description. You may point out one here and there, who seems to pass through life without mourning, and to spend his days in one continual sunshine, undimmed by the clouds and storms of adversity. Yet even in such a life, there are moments of darkness, which cast a shadow upon the joyous heart, though none may be visible upon the countenance. "The mourners go about the streets," not merely "because man goeth to his long home"—not merely in the funeral procession, and covered with the garments of woe; they are continually going about the streets, the highways, and the lanes of the earth. You pass them in the crowded thoroughfare, and behold their outward appearance, which seems to know nothing but business and pleasure. You cannot see their hearts, even as they are not able to see your own. You cannot perceive the burden so heavy, and the yoke so grievous, which are pressing upon them. God alone knoweth the heart. He beholds the ten

thousand sorrows that press upon the children of men, and counts the burning tears that are dropped in lonely places. The mourners go about the streets; they dwell in royal palaces; they sit upon the thrones and high places of the earth; they are found at the festive board; they sigh in the midst of gold, silver, and precious stones; yea, the earth is full of mourners. And, as you are not able to find two countenances or forms precisely alike, so too has each particular child of earth his own particular sorrow, known to no one fully, but to God, and his own heart.

When the Lord Jesus Christ saw the multitudes, he also saw many mourners. There were present before him, sick people, taken with divers diseases and torments; and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy. Surely these had experienced the sorrows of life; they had spent their lives in sadness, and expected no relief until the angel of death should take them away from this vale of tears. But besides these, he looked upon many others who mourned. He did not only read their sorrow in their eyes, and the lines of care which marked their countenances, — he looked into their hearts. The spirit of the Lord God was upon him, not only to preach the gospel to the poor, but also "to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion; to give unto them beauty for ashes — the oil of joy for mourning — the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Looking upon them with those eyes of gentleness and divine compassion, this "man of sorrows" uttered the strange,

but comforting words: "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted!"

Was this gracious beatitude intended for those who mourn over the afflictions with which God has visited them here? Does the Savior mean to say that all such are blessed, and that all such shall be comforted? In one sense, we may answer affirmatively; but in another we must reply No!

There is a sense, in which we may say, blessed are all that mourn. There is a blessedness in sorrow, even as there is a blessing in the dark clouds, and in the storms and tempests that trouble the land and the sea. Though all these afflictions upon earth come upon us, because we are fallen creatures, and they are, more or less remotely, the wages of sin, yet God has designed that they should do us good. They are calculated to soften our hearts — to break our pride and independence — to wean us from the earth, and to direct us to that God, who is our Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, — and who alone can dry our tears, bind up our bleeding wounds, and give rest to our troubled spirits. And is there not an indefinite bliss in sorrow, provided it be not tainted with the beginnings of despair? Is it not, as if the soul was tremblingly rejoicing at the prospect of finding its only rest in the peace of God? May we not consider this a wonderful and merciful provision of God, in thus giving the mourning soul a feeble foretaste of the peace it would enjoy, if it were to relinquish all earthly things, and all confidence in itself? Ah! well would it be for the soul, when thus driven back upon

itself, if it should return to its rest! Then indeed it would be comforted. Is there not bliss too in tears? Do not men speak of the luxury of woe? There may therefore be a certain blessedness to be applied to all mourners.

But it is here, as in the former beatitude. Poverty in itself is not deserving of a beatitude; *mourning* in itself cannot be more so. Though they possess that which might bring forth a harvest of joy, the mourners of the world are not blessed, nor do they find comfort. There were hundreds at the Savior's feet, when he uttered these words, who could honestly declare, that although they were mourners, they were not happy, and had not found comfort. The Apostle says: "the sorrow of the world worketh death." Mourning which does not humble us, soften and break our hearts, lead us to mourn over the great cause, root, and spring of all evil and affliction in our own hearts, and draw us to God, that he may forgive and comfort us, — will grow by what it feeds on — will lead us to despair, and to death. Though there is a sweetness in sorrow, this is soon over, unless we turn to God, from whom it proceeds. Unless the mourner turns to the living God, he will discover that his sorrow will sour his countenance, crush his heart, and embitter his life. Although the Savior invites the mourners, whoever they may be, and gives them the assurance that they shall be comforted, — we believe, that if he began by blessing the poor "in spirit," he also refers to *spiritual* mourning. Some interpreters have explained the Savior's words in a different manner.

Some will tell us, that he refers to those who mourn over those tribulations which they are obliged to endure for the sake of the gospel. Those who tread in the Master's steps, must expect to be persecuted by a wicked world. Their troubles will be many, and their life shall be one of mourning. Blessed are all my disciples who thus mourn: for they shall be comforted. A very true and cheering assurance; but, we do not believe this to be the sense of this verse, and principally for the satisfactory reason, that the *last* of the beatitudes is devoted to this subject.

Another one says, this "mourning" refers to a godly resignation in trouble. This too does not satisfy us. Others again, have understood it of mourning for the sins of others — for the iniquities committed by the professors of Christianity; and especially for the sins of the place and nation where they live. It is indeed praiseworthy to mourn over the wickedness of the world. Must we not all say with David: "Am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?" It is perfectly natural, and highly necessary for every Christian to lament the defections from the Church of Christ, and deeply to mourn, when he beholds the professed disciples of his Lord putting him to an open shame, and disgracing their Christian profession. Unworthy would he be of the name of Christian, who could live in a wicked time, and wicked place, without frequently and sincerely lamenting such wickedness, and doing all he can to bring about a different state of things. It is true—alas, that it is so — that there are some, who are so selfishly occupied with them-

selves, that they seem indifferent to the rest of the world around them. Blessed are all those who mourn thus for others: they shall be comforted by beholding many turned from their evil ways, and by the overthrow of evil plans. But the Savior meant more than all this.

In meditating upon the first words of this remarkable discourse, we found the first link of a closely connected chain — a starting point, which will enable us to proceed with greater certainty. The first step in the gospel kingdom was there revealed, and we are now brought to the second. Blessed, in the very first place, are those men whose eyes have been opened by the word and Spirit of God, so that they have learned to see their spiritual poverty — their want of that righteousness which alone availeth with God. Sin has become known to them. Yet we intimated before, that the real poverty of spirit was not a mere dead knowledge, which terminates in indifference. It must be combined with, and lead to *feeling* upon this all-important discovery. The mind having become enlightened, the *heart* must now be interested in the matter. It must not merely remain a matter of knowledge, but of deep and absorbing *feeling*. If a man has become acquainted with his own poverty, and he begins to see himself as God sees him, what other feeling can take possession of his heart, if he feels at all in the matter, than that of deep shame, and profound sorrow? If he feels at all, after beholding his face in the truthful mirror of God's word, he will not forget what manner of man he is; but his heart and mouth will mourn

over this sad and dangerous condition of heart and life. He will mourn for his sin. This is the mourning Christ refers to. Blessed are those, who, having been led to see their poverty, keenly feel it, and lament it before God, with sincere shame and sorrow.

The greatest evil that befals man in time, is death. The Scriptures assure us, that "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." All the evils that lie between birth and death, the beginning and end of life, are born of sin. All the multiplied evils under which the human race has groaned for six thousand years, have sprung from sin. All the evils we personally encounter in the world, and our own hearts, spring from the same prolific source. It is well indeed to mourn for evil, wherever it exists, and in whatever form it may appear; but better yet to mourn for that which is the root and source of all this evil. It may be well for you to bow to the dust in sincere mourning over some past action of your life, or even an entire life, badly spent; but only when you *mourn* in the sense of this beatitude, are you weeping for that, which demands all the feeling you can command. You may generally weep for others; you may mourn over troubles and disasters too numerous to mention; you may be called one of the mourners of the earth; your tears may have left deep lines of sorrow upon your countenance; but, unless you have mourned over sin, you have not dropped your tears over the great evil of the race, and the individual. Blessed, therefore, the man who mourns over his sins.

With ten thousand times more force than the ancient

orator, can we say to the man whose heart and life are revealed to him by God, "if you have tears, prepare to shed them now!" When the suffering Redeemer of the world walked out to Golgotha, the women of Jerusalem bewailed and lamented him. He turned unto them, and said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me; but weep for yourselves, and for your children!" How often might we apply this language! How many causes and individuals, on whose account tears are shed, and lamentations uttered, might pointedly apply the Savior's words to those who pity them, and say, "weep for yourselves." Not as if we were not to weep for others, but that we should learn to feel our own miseries, as they ought to be felt.

But what is this mourning for sin? Does the Savior require tears, groans, sighs, and loud lamentations? Is it necessary for men to put on sackcloth and ashes, and to banish sleep from their eyes? A man may do all this, and yet not mourn for his sins, in the gospel sense. There were men with disfigured faces, and of a sad countenance, in Christ's time, who appeared to be sincere mourners, before men; yet, Christ declares them hypocrites. The Jew might tear his garments, without tearing his heart. He might observe all the outward forms of sorrow, while the heart was a stranger to it. It may be so still. Tears may be poured out for sin, and loud lamentations may express shame, sorrow, and repentance. Yet the heart — the immortal soul of man may not have anything to do with it. When the Savior speaks of mourning, he does not mean the mere outward exhibitions of

it, but the deep, honest mourning of the soul, which arises upon a deep conviction of sin.

And do we not find, that sorrow manifests itself in a different manner in different individuals? Stand upon the grave-yard, and mark the various forms which grief assumes in those, of whose sincerity you entertain no doubt. Does not this expression of feeling depend in a very great degree upon the different temperaments and constitutions of those whom you observe? In one you behold a violent and consuming grief, accompanied by floods of tears, and loud lamentations. Another one stands in the deep silence of woe, immovable as a statue, without the power to shed a single tear. May not the grief of both be equally deep and sincere? Shall not this difference in individuals exhibit itself in the expression of mourning over sin? Will you pronounce nothing *real sorrow*, real penitence, unless it exhibits itself in a stereotyped form? Must all men be alike in this, when they are not alike in other things? Christ prescribes no form for the outward expression of grief. The grief of one may be like the whirlwind, the tempest, or the earthquake; that of the other may be like the still small voice. One may mourn with all his heart, and his sorrow may be visible to all men. Another may mourn with equal depth of feeling and sincerity, while no man perceives, and God alone marks his humble and contrite spirit. Do not, therefore, venture to measure the sincerity of any man's sorrow for sin, by the degree of outward grief. Least of all, judge of yourself in this way. Though such ebullitions may

be perfectly natural and necessary in some natures, do not force them, in yourself or others. Let us remember, it is far easier to force the outward mourning, than to feel that inner mourning of the soul, which the beatitude blesses and requires. Yet how many poor souls have tortured themselves with fears, almost amounting to despair, because they never could honestly express such great and violent grief, as they found in others. And how many have felt satisfied with themselves, because they have passed through a violent outward exercise of this kind, although the heart was not broken and prostrated before God.

And what is to be the subject of this mourning? We have already remarked, sin; but we refer to it again, with another purpose. How frequently do we find, in the lives of great men, when they are represented as reviewing their past lives, that they are ready to point out individual errors and missteps, which alone they seem to regret! How often is this the case, in sorrow for sin! Isolated actions in our life-time—solitary sins, or *faults*, as we may please to call them, are regarded, and lamented. All such mourning, however, is unsatisfactory in the sight of God, and ultimately destructive to us. We are not merely to take in the prominent objects of past life, and the besetting sins of our hearts; but we must examine ourselves with the microscope of divine truth, and mourn over the whole life—the entire heart, and all our sins. Therefore has the Savior placed the first beatitude before the present. Whatever you discover by means of that first lesson in the gospel, is to be the great subject of

your sincere mourning, according to the second. The more carefully the first is attended to, the better will be the preparation for the present. It is not enough to select prominent acts of your life; your confession must be a general one: "I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Ah! how much pride may lurk beneath such partial self-condemnation and mourning! A man magnanimously sits in judgment upon himself, and deeply laments parts of his life, and errors of his heart. But all the time, "self," thus judging and lamenting, feels secure, and considers itself good enough, with the few exceptional matters lamented. Our whole being, mind and heart, are to mourn before God, taught by his spirit and word. "A man may lament his moral and religious defects; but he may do it from wounded pride — an unsatisfied feeling of self-love, or extremely sensitive vanity," says one. Not so the real mourner.

Others again lament their spiritual condition, because they contemplate the awful future towards which they are hastening, and the righteous God, who is a consuming fire. They know that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. They behold in spirit, the fire that is not quenched, and the worm that dieth not. The outer darkness, "where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth," is ever before them. They fear God's power and wrath — they tremble at the prospect of hell. Or if their thoughts do not reach as far into the future as this, they lament the afflictions and misfortunes which sin has brought upon

them. This is not mourning for sin, but over its consequences, and fearful punishment. Sin in itself, as a transgression of God's law, as a crime against the high majesty of heaven, as a deadly thing in itself — injurious to you and others; *this* should fill you with sorrow — this should teach your tears to flow, and not your present distresses, and future damnation. Those who merely mourn for the latter reasons, have never mourned because of sin.

Blessed are they that mourn, and mourn sincerely. And one great mark of such sincerity — a safer and more satisfactory test than tears, sackcloth and ashes, is that required by the prophet-preacher, on the banks of the Jordan: "Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance." He that is ashamed of the past — really and honestly ashamed of it, will not think of repeating it. He who weeps honest tears, and expresses sincere sorrow, will prove his sincerity, by forsaking the old paths, and old deeds. The sincere mourner will confess his evil before God and man, and turn over at once, as a first step, a new leaf in his existence. Such sorrow is not a worldly sorrow, but wrought by the Holy Ghost, who has called a man to the knowledge of the gospel, and has enlightened him to see himself as he is. This is that "godly sorrow," which "worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of." This is what James means, when he says: "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness." As we believe that "poverty of spirit" must characterize the true Christian as long

as he lives, so do we believe that he must continue a "mourner," in the sense of mourning "over sin," as long as he lives. And it is only as long as he sincerely continues to feel so, that he can apply the beatitude to himself. We mark a gradation in the beatitudes. Not that we mean thereby, that after a man ceases to be poor in spirit, he then becomes a mourner, and then meek, &c. These are successive stages, but mingle with each other, and it will be as difficult for any one to point out the precise line where one ends and the other begins, as it is to point out the precise spot where one color of the rainbow mingles with another. As long, therefore, as the Apostle John says: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us:"—as long as the Lord Jesus teaches us to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses"—as long as we must say with David: "Who can understand his errors?"—"Cleanse thou me from secret faults," so long must we feel our condition, and be filled with daily shame and sorrow before God. Though we dwell in affluence and prosperity, and there is no cause for tears in our outward condition, we must continue among the mourners before God, until we die. To mourn for sin, is not merely the act of a moment.

"Blessed are they that mourn: FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED." The Messiah promised to Israel, should be a *comforter*, as well as a deliverer. Looking forward to those latter days, and in the gospel spirit, the commandment is already given to the prophets: "Comfort

ye, comfort ye my people; saith your God." The aged Simeon, a man just and devout, was "waiting for the consolation of Israel;" and when he had taken the infant Jesus in his arms, he blessed God, and said: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." He held in his arms the long-expected consolation of Israel, who was not only to preach the gospel to the poor, but to comfort those that mourn. Such comfort was already promised in the Old Testament. In Isaiah we read: "For thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit,—to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

But this comfort is alone fully given by Him, who also said: "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest." He declares the mourners blessed, because they shall be comforted. Before speaking of those mainly intended, let us say a word to the vast multitude of mourners, amidst innumerable sorrows. Where will you find comfort? Whither will ye carry your heavy burden, in order to be rid of it? There is but one to whom you can go, and thither you shall not go in vain. He has not, it is true, merely entered into the world, to comfort concerning these sorrows; he has come to destroy the works of the devil, and to bring life and immortality to light. He has come, particularly, to heal the universal leprosy of sin, and to preach Repentance. Yet

all these earthly sorrows are included in the plan of his mercy. As he went about on earth, doing good, healing the sick, raising the dead, and comforting the disconsolate; so does he still desire to heal the ills of humanity, and still remains the only one, who possesses the unbounded *power*, and unbounded and merciful *will*, to comfort.

"Come, ye disconsolate, where'er you languish,
Come to the mercy-seat, fervently kneel;
Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish;
Earth has no sorrows that heaven cannot heal.

"Joy of the comfortless, light of the straying;
Hope, when all others die, fadeless and pure;
Here speaks the Comforter, in mercy saying,
Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot cure."

Praise be to God, that we know this! Earth has truly no sorrow that heaven cannot heal. Come, therefore, ye that mourn, and ye shall be comforted. Where otherwise can ye be comforted? You cannot find it in yourselves. You will not find it in the world. Words, looks, honor, pleasure cannot comfort you. There are sorrows so great, so overwhelming, that the world shrinks back, afraid even to assume the office of the comforter. There are times when all will pass you, like the priest and Levite; where then is the good Samaritan? You will find him in Christ alone, that High-priest, who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." You shall be comforted, if you come to him. His word is pledged, and his power is undoubted. Millions have come unto him, in every

imaginable earthly sorrow, and have been comforted. But those that go to him, must go as men do to a great physician, who is their last hope, and whom they must implicitly obey. However humiliating your position, however bitter and severe the medicine, your love of life forbids your murmuring. Come to him: he will give you rest, provided you learn of him, and take his yoke upon you.

But let us turn to the other mourners, who mourn for *sin*. To such especially does the Savior say: Blessed are ye: ye shall be comforted. They are blessed! Is there a particular healing and atoning virtue in repentance? Does a man earn forgiveness, peace, grace, and bliss by sorrow and repentance? Shall this be counted unto him for righteousness? Some men seem to weep and lament, as if they would *buy* pardon by these things. But the word of God clearly informs us, that we cannot buy these gifts, either by labor or sorrow. It is free grace in Jesus Christ. He is the cause and source of their comforts; their knowledge of sin and mourning, merely prepare them for, and render them susceptible to, his grace. He declares, "they shall be comforted." God promises that he will "*revive*" the spirit of the humble, and *revive* the heart of the contrite ones. And what can be this "comfort" and "reviving?" What does he who mourns for sin desire above all things? Is it not pardon, forgiveness — a blotting out of the past, — peace, rest for the troubled heart? "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute

sin." "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." And this blessed comfort is promised. In the Old Testament, already, the Lord said: "Come now, and let us reason together; saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." And does not the New Testament assure us: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out: "for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." We shall be comforted with the assurance of a full, free pardon, for Christ's sake.

Let us not forget that the Savior says, *shall* be comforted. It is a comfort that begins now, goes throughout time, and finds its most gracious and glorious completion in heaven. Now we need, first of all, the blessed comfort of pardon, for a crucified Savior's sake; then the additional comfort of his continued presence and support. This comfort shall be of endless duration — it shall be co-eternal with our own existence. If we mourn for sins past, we shall be con-

soled with "My son, my daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee!" If we mourn for indwelling sin, and our own weakness, and the temptations to which we are exposed, we are comforted with the assurance, — "My grace shall be sufficient for thee." We shall be comforted by the gift of the Holy Ghost, who is the *Comforter*. But our consolations shall not end here, — they reach beyond the grave, and time and space. Those who have mourned with a godly sorrow, here upon earth, shall be comforted for ever and ever in the presence of the Father. There shall we indeed finally and fully obtain "beauty for ashes; the oil of joy for mourning; the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Abraham said of Lazarus, and the rich man: "Now he is comforted; and thou art tormented." It is only by tasting the mourning of repentance, that we shall obtain real comfort in life — in the bitter hour of death, and in Abraham's bosom. Have you learned to see your spiritual poverty, beloved reader? O then do not rest there; but pray God that you may *feel*, deeply feel your sinfulness, and mourn with a godly sorrow, that leads to salvation. If you do this, you shall be comforted. Yes,

"Blessed are the men of broken heart,
Who mourn for sin, with inward smart:
For them divine compassion flows,
A healing balm for all their woes."

CHAPTER III.

The Meek.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."—Matth. v. 5.

It seemed paradoxical to pronounce the "poor in spirit," and those "that mourn" blessed. The selection of these two classes of persons, strikes us as strange, for at first sight we would not feel inclined to admit any bliss to be connected with such circumstances. The third Beatitude is, perhaps, a greater paradox than these,—not so much on account of the persons mentioned, as for the singular promise given them. The children of this world may wonder at the bliss of the poor in spirit, and of the mourners; but the strangest of all to them, is the promise, that the meek "shall inherit the *earth*." The meek man is mild of temper, soft, and gentle. Is it in accordance with experience and observation, in this world, that such a temper gains a name and place in the earth? The meek man is not easily provoked—is yielding, and forbears under injuries. Has such a spirit proved the most successful in gaining a noble and lasting heritage here? The world will reply, that those only, who are firm, brave, unyielding, quick to resent injuries,

and contend for their own rights under all circumstances, really inherit the earth. Her kings, conquerors, statesmen, and successful reformers have not been taken from the ranks of mildness, gentleness and forbearance. Such qualifications may answer very well in the family, and for the weaker sex; but will never satisfy the strong and courageous men of the earth. Many, therefore, will direct us to the movements of the world, from day to day, and bid us behold an evident contradiction of the words of the beatitude. And, doubtless, these words fell upon equally skeptical ears, when first uttered by the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ. We trust to show, however, that this strange saying is literally fulfilled in the world now, and will find its most complete fulfilment in the future.

But let us take the most natural and necessary course, by endeavoring to become acquainted with the kind of persons, upon whom the blessed Redeemer pronounces these words.

Who are the meek? Who is not acquainted with persons who are considered *meek?* Men and women of a mild, gentle, soft and tractable disposition, who glide through this rough world with a light and silent step, yielding to opposition, and never resenting injuries. It is stamped upon their countenances, marks their every word and movement, and all their intercourse with their fellow-men. They seem, in their mildness and gentleness, like the innocent lambs and doves with which men are fond of comparing them. Their lives are pleasant, and their in-

fluence generally wholesome. Is such a disposition and course of life the result of principle, in most cases? May it not in very many, be called a natural, constitutional disposition? Much of such mildness and peacefulness may arise from an utter indifference to all principle, and a reprehensible love of personal ease and quietness. Such persons may whisper Peace! Peace! when there is no peace; and are meek and gentle, either because it is their natural disposition, or because they find it more convenient and comfortable to look and live so. There is an unmistakable difference in the constitutional temperaments of men: the one is naturally warm, hasty, irascible; the other cool, deliberate, mild, and soft. Much as the world would be benefited, if there were more of such gentleness and mildness among men, we cannot assign the highest honor and value to such a temperament, unless it be the result of pure and earnest principle — the work of the sanctifying spirit of truth. We cannot, therefore, believe that the Savior applied this beatitude to this natural temperament; for he is not speaking of natural, but spiritual matters.

But, where the blessed Gospel and the Holy Ghost exert an influence upon a man's mind and heart, they will render him meek; and such softness and gentleness is one of the very noblest and most blessed fruits of the spirit. If a man is naturally meek, this meekness is now purified, becomes a matter of deep principle, increases in firmness, and is ready to sacrifice all personal ease. When the Holy Ghost ennobles and purifies the natural temper, the meekest and gentlest

man or woman, becomes strong in the power of the Lord. So, also, does it subdue the boldest and most impetuous temperament. It produces the most wonderful changes: — a Boanerges becomes a loving John; and a fiery Paul becomes gentle and kind like a woman. The natural temper may be irritable, but the Holy Spirit produces mildness, and fills the heart with that charity which "suffereth long, and is kind; doth not behave itself unseemly; is not easily provoked; beareth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things." The former man was determined to stand upon his own rights, to adhere to his own opinions; but becoming *meek*, he yields. Formerly, he was ready to resent every injury, and to take the sword of vengeance into his own hand; now he forbears, and leaves his cause with God, thinking "vengeance is his — he will repay;" praying even for his enemies: for he has not only looked upon the martyr Stephen,— he has been in the school of the best of teachers: he has been sitting with Mary of Bethany, at Jesus' feet, who hath said: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am *meek* and lowly in heart." Formerly he was proud — proud in heart — proud in look — proud in word — proud in the very manner in which he trod upon God's earth; now he is meek — that is, humble, not affectedly, but really; not merely outwardly, but in heart. Formerly he relied upon himself; now he feels his insufficiency. Formerly he groaned and struggled amidst his afflictions, and showed his impatience under God's restraining hand, like the fiery horse that champs his

bit; now he stands meek as a lamb, his heart and body tamed, by the Holy Spirit of God. Here is more than a mere natural meekness. This has not been, and cannot be wrought by flesh and blood. The leopard cannot change his spots; the Ethiopian cannot change his skin. This is God's work! And this meekness will shed a mild radiance around the entire man. It will transfigure his entire walk and conversation.

Surely, this must be the meekness referred to by the Savior in the beatitude? Whilst we do not pretend to deny that such a spirit is intended by the Lord, we believe that something more is meant here.

We have before intimated, that we find an intimate connection between these different beatitudes, and an ascent from the first to the last. We have traced this between the two first; and the connection between the remaining ones, after the present, will be easily shown. It may appear more difficult to point out a connection between this third beatitude, and those which precede it. Yet we believe such a connection exists, and shall endeavor to point it out.

Before a man can exhibit true Christian meekness and gentleness in his walk and conversation, he must be meek at heart. All Christian graces have their seat within; and from the loving fountain within, and from this alone, supplied by the Spirit of God, flow all those sweet waters that gladden the family, the Church, and the community at large. Real Christian gentleness and softness, will always be coupled with humility. He that is meek must of necessity be

lowly of heart. Meekness is not only opposed to irascibility, but to pride and self-sufficiency. If the heart is meek, it is also humble. We therefore believe that there must be a meekness of heart and spirit, even before it can exhibit itself in words and works, before men. The word meek frequently refers (in the Scriptures) to an inward state of feeling. St. Peter says: "Let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price." If this then must be a disposition of the heart, towards whom must it be felt, first of all? Must we not reply, to God! We must become *humble*, *lowly*, *gentle*, in his sight. Our hearts must become soft in his hand, as the clay in the hand of the potter. Our spirits must bow in humble submission to his holy and perfect will.

We have before made use of the sentiment of another, when speaking of the influence of religion upon the knowledge, and the feelings of a man. In the first beatitude, a man learns to *know* himself. From this he must proceed a step further and higher; this knowledge should touch his heart: he should feel upon the subject. If he does, he will mourn for his sins. If he mourns, in truth and earnestness, his stubborn *will* will also be broken. But we can conceive of a mourner whose tears are flowing for his sins, whilst his heart is still unbroken, and his will still firm and unyielding. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted; blessed are the meek, those who are bowed down before God, whose wills submit

entirely to the will of God. It might be said that true mourning includes all this; yet, lest any should err, the Savior refers to this meekness in this connection. Sorrow has a tendency to soften the heart. In the furnace of sincere affliction the iron heart is melted. All who sincerely mourn shall be comforted, if they bow entirely before the Lord, and give up all obduracy and self-will. The heart, as we have heard before, is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. There is a spirit of self-love, and self-reliance, in our heart, that is not inclined to submit. There is a natural stubbornness and independence which must be broken, if our repentance is to be sincere. The very last opposition must be overturned. The last stronghold of self-will must be given up. We must become thoroughly *humbled*, and *softened* in the sight of our Lord and God. The very last reliance of our own must be cast overboard; the very last claim to personal merit and righteousness, must be given up, and we must bow before God, like the publican in the temple, ashamed to lift up our eyes, but smiting upon our breasts, and praying, God, be merciful to me a sinner; or, like the prodigal returning, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." Here is humility, and a true meekness before God.

Rambach beautifully and truly says of this meekness: "This is a fruit of the Spirit, which is found growing upon the field of spiritual poverty, repentance, and sorrow; a precious flower which grows up out of

the ashes of self-love, and upon the grave of pride; when men, on the one hand, behold their own great unworthiness, misery, and danger; and, on the other hand, the kindness and gentleness of God in Christ. (Titus, 3 : 2–4.) Its inward form consists in such a condition of heart, that, by a knowledge of its wretchedness, and the unspeakable grace of God, it is made so pliant, tame, gentle, yielding, and tractable, that it loses its natural roughness, its harsh, wild, and unbroken nature."

Truly may we say, that self-love, the very last thing we can give up, must be destroyed by the fire of the Holy Ghost, before this lovely flower, a true emblem of humility, can spring from its ashes. Pride must be buried, before such beauty and fragrance will greet us. Blessed is the man who is thus meek, humble and gentle before God, first of all. He shall be comforted as he bows more and more, and from the very depths of his heart learns to say, Not my will — but thine — be done. As he mourns sincerely, he is comforted. As the comforts of the Gospel pour into his ears and heart, the exceeding great love of Christ softens his heart, and has the very natural effect of humbling him to the dust. On the other hand, his numerous transgressions and omissions of duty, crowd upon him, and he is brought to the very dust of the earth. He now becomes thoroughly submissive to the will of God. It is well, if the Holy Ghost has opened your eyes to behold yourself as you are, your spiritual poverty; better still, if you have learned to sorrow for this; and still better than this, if your sorrow has been so sincere

and deep, that it has broken your will and taught it humility and meekness before God.

Here then we behold the origin of true Christian meekness. The heart must be softened by God, and before God, before it can produce a soft, gentle, meek and lowly disposition and walk. As important as we deem this internal state of the heart, so important is its exhibition in life. As it is a part of the Christian's life at all times, to be "poor in spirit," and a "mourner," so also must he ever be meek, before God and man. He that has thus been subdued in the sight of God, will be gentle in his intercourse with men. Feeling that he had ten thousand talents forgiven, he cannot be harsh towards the poor fellow-servant that owes him an hundred pence. As long as a man's will has not bowed to the highest authority, that of his God and Redeemer, it will not yield and forbear among men. Real Christian meekness is something which can only be produced by the spirit of the Gospel. Says one: "*Meekness* is a grace which Jesus alone inculcated, and which no ancient philosopher seems to have understood or recommended. He enjoins it upon all his followers; and by giving it this particular place in his sermon on the mount, he teaches them, how it is produced, and whence alone it flows. The sincere mourner for sin will be led to this inward gentleness and humility, which will show itself in his intercourse with friend and foe, in the Church and in the world.

Blessed indeed are the meek!

They are blessed in their own hearts—in their own

feelings. Humiliating as such a posture may appear to the natural man, it is the only one which satisfies, and gives peace to the heart. When the heart is softened, when the will is subjected to the wise, holy, and loving will of God, we begin to feel at home. The soul is returning to her rest. The creature has assumed the proper position before the great and holy Creator. It is the real end, towards which godly sorrow leads. The sorrow of the world worketh terror, obduracy, rebellion, despair, death. The sorrow which is called godly, humbles, softens, and casts into the arms of God. The will is bowed; and when thus cast upon the ground, the heart will be brought to ask in true humility and softness, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

But let us mark the special promise which the Savior gives to the meek:

"THEY SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH!"

Here lies the paradox. How strange, that the meek, the soft and gentle, should inherit the earth! They seem to be the very last persons in the world likely to arrive at such a possession and dominion. Many have supposed, that this beatitude was particularly intended for the Jews, who were of a turbulent, proud, and rebellious spirit, admonishing them to cultivate a spirit of moderation and gentleness, if they desired to possess the land promised to their fathers, and the dominion of the earth. In Deuteronomy 28, they had often read the passage: "And the Lord shall make thee the head and not the tail, and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be

beneath." This they desired to become, but in the spirit of the world. Christ here desires to give them a lesson, which every nation would do well to study, "the *meek* shall inherit the earth." The words of the Savior evidently stand in connection with those in the thirty-seventh Psalm: "But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." The word "earth" in the beatitude might have been translated "land." Every reader of the Bible knows, that the land of Canaan was promised to the Jews. God said to Abraham: "I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it." Again we read that Moses said to God: "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou gavest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven; and *all this land* that I have spoken of, will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever." "That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the *land* which the Lord thy God giveth thee." To enter and possess this land, was the great hope and desire of Israel through all their wanderings in the desert. To retain this land, as a holy and blessed *inheritance*, derived from their fathers, and given by God to them and their children, was their highest duty and ambition. The land of Canaan thus became an emblem of all earthly prosperity; and the Jews were in the habit of using this expression as a proverbial one, "to denote any great blessing, perhaps as the sum of all blessings," (Barnes).

However, we find another idea connected with this. The kingdom of God established in Canaan, was a type and shadow of a kingdom that should cover the earth, extend throughout time, and reach into eternity. God says: "Thy people also shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified." "And they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord; and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken." It refers primarily to the "land" of Canaan, then to the whole earth, to the spiritual kingdom of God here, and that kingdom of glory hereafter, that happy land beyond the clouds; and farther even than this, to the *new earth*, which shall be created at last, for the eternal inheritance of God's people. Is. 66: 22. "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain." Again, in the 65th Chap. "Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." And in the book of Rev., Chap. 21: 1. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea."

We do not believe that the Savior merely uttered these words, in order to give the Jews a lesson in true politics. Yet that this is a true principle, even in the world, and the history of nations, who can deny? Paradoxical as it may appear, humility and meekness shall gain the victory in this world. When Æsop was

asked by Chilo, what constituted the employment of God? he replied: "He humbles that which is lofty, and exalts the lowly." A truth which is more fully and satisfactorily exhibited in the words of Paul in the first chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians: "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise: and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence." Kings, like Rehoboam, may answer their people roughly, may add to their yoke, and may threaten to chastise them with scorpions. But what will be the result? Will not the cry always arise: "To your tents, O Israel?" The kings and rulers of the earth should learn, that the meek shall inherit the earth. So too, have the proud, overbearing, conquering, and destroying nations of the past, and of modern times, proved by their own history, that it is true of nations as of kings, the meek shall inherit the earth. May our own nation never enter the school of the world's conquerors, but that of Christianity, which teaches humility and gentleness, towards God and mankind.

Meekness and gentleness in the individual, shall reap a reward here; for godliness has not only the promise of the world to come, but of the present time also. The rough, the passionate, the proud, and the revengeful shall not prosper among men, nor gain their esteem or affection. A firm, consistent meekness,

based upon truth and principle, shall really inherit the earth. It was true in Solomon's day, and it is true still, that "a soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger." Do you wish to gain the confidence and affection of your fellow-men, then cultivate this gracious gift of the Spirit. Meekness will secure your prosperity among men. The Savior does not promise wealth, and power, and fame; for these things are not necessary to real happiness. "Godliness with contentment is great gain." To the meek, we may apply the language of St. Paul: "for all things are yours;—whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours."

Paul says, Rom. 4 : 13—"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith." Abraham shall be the heir of the world, in his believing descendants, not according to the flesh, but the Spirit. The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ shall possess the earth. The Spirit of Christ shall reign over all. Although "the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed." God will say: "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion," and to him, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possessions." "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a

name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in earth, and things under the earth." This work shall go on, until the earth is filled with the knowledge and glory of the Lord, even as the waters cover the deep. His followers, wherever they are, the truly meek, who have learned of him, shall take possession of the earth for him, until they shall occupy new heavens and a new earth for ever.

The land of Canaan may also be considered a type of that better country, beyond time and space. "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come." "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." This is the heavenly Canaan, abounding in better things than milk and honey, whither Christ Jesus — a greater than Joshua, shall lead us. Many therefore have interpreted the promise before us with reference to this. The meek shall inherit the land—the reality which the earthly Canaan foreshadowed, the land of everlasting rest. Others have thought of the spiritual blessings to be inherited in the Church of Christ, that land and kingdom, which he has come to establish in the earth. All these interpretations teach the truth, for all these blessings are included. Yet we believe, that we shall do best, by embracing every thing, in the form of real happiness, and gospel privileges, that time and eternity can offer. The meek are the true citizens of the world. The meek are the true subjects of the gospel kingdom. Those who are thus humbled and

softened, Christ will accept, and call his own. As such, they shall share in the blessings of his Church. Humbled with him, they shall reign with him, and be joint-heirs with Christ. They form a part of the nation that shall enter the heavenly Canaan; and they shall inherit the new earth. Like Abraham, they shall become heirs of the world; yea, they shall inherit two worlds, and enjoy the blessings of time and eternity.

The Savior blessed the poor in spirit, because they possessed the disposition requisite for entering the Gospel kingdom. He blesses the mourners: for they shall be comforted, with the pardon of sins, and the consolations of the great Comforter. He leads us into deep places, when he speaks of poverty of spirit. He takes us further still, when he speaks of genuine sorrow for sin. But he is not yet satisfied,—the will, the proud and stubborn will must be bowed; and we must become soft and tender, and tractable, in his strong, but careful and loving hand. He that becomes truly meek before God, and then before man, has been taught, and brought to *deny himself*. He is prostrate before his Master and God. When we consider the words in this light, how exceedingly appropriate and encouraging the terms of the promise, which at first sight seem so incongruous, so unsuitable in this connection. As if he would draw and encourage us to submit our hearts and minds to him, and to say "thy will be done," he promises such an inheritance. As he humbled himself before he was exalted

above the highest in heaven, so must we be humbled, before we can inherit the earth. Understanding the promise in the unlimited fulness already mentioned, we see how a man is only introduced to the greatest blessings of Christianity, when he has taken the lowest step, and has learned thoroughly to deny himself. Then, when he wanders in the depths, in darkness, in loneliness, — without crown, or pride, or anything of self, upon which to rely; — when he feels his utter emptiness; and his heart, humbled and softened, yields entirely to God, and is ready to submit to his will, whatever that may be; — it is then that the most gracious and glorious promise falls upon his ear:—Thou, dethroned, helpless, and poor one, shalt inherit the earth. He has wandered, sad and lonely, to the very extremity of the narrow way, and all is gloomy before and around him; but now a wide and delightful prospect astonishes his eye. The poor prodigal is thoroughly humbled, when he opens his mouth to make the confession to his Father. It was a bitter step — to see his degradation amidst the swine; it was bitter to mourn over his sins; it was bitter to return; but the most difficult was to meet the father, and to utter that humiliating confession. However, he uttered it. Pride and self-will were broken, and he stood with the countenance and attitude of meekness, humility, and softness, before his Father. The very next moment, he felt the trembling arms of a forgiving father about his neck, and his warm kiss upon his cheek. So does this promise come upon the meek.

But let us remember, that meekness, in order to obtain this inheritance, must always characterize our walk and conversation, before God and man. God will only comfort those who mourn. He does not dwell with the proud and haughty, but with those who are of an humble and contrite spirit. We are told, "the Lord lifteth up the meek; he casteth the wicked down to the ground." One of the constantly given, and needful "fruits of the Spirit," is meekness. Paul beseeches the Ephesians, and us all, to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, with all lowliness and *meekness*." Again we read, in his epistle to Titus: "speak evil of no man, be no brawlers; but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men." These exhibitions of true meekness can proceed from no other source, than a true meekness within—an humble and yielding attitude before God.

Therefore, the world cannot fully understand this grace. It may affect the exterior, but it cannot produce the genuine, gracious virtue. It may send forth its *gentle*men, with sweetness upon their lips, and grace and kindness in their deportment; but he that has been made gentle before God, by a feeling of his unworthiness, and deep sorrow for sin, will go forth and walk gently among men. He that is harsh, and proud, and self-willed among men, has never passed through these three stages of the Christian life, which the Savior presents in the beatitudes already considered.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

"Father of Eternal grace,
  Glorify thyself in me!
Meekly beaming in my face,
  May the world thine image see.

Humble, holy, all resign'd
  To thy will,—thy will be done!
Give me, Lord, the perfect mind
  Of thy well beloved Son.

CHAPTER IV.

The Hungry and Thirsty.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."—Matth., v. 6.

When we examine our frames, we must exclaim, with the royal singer of Israel: "I will praise thee: for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that, my soul knoweth right well." In the beginning of the sacred volume, we are told: "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." How wonderful this strange compound of body and soul! How wonderfully adapted to the world which it is to inhabit! How wisely and kindly has the great God, in whom we live, and move, and have our being, provided for the continued existence, activity, and welfare of the man he has created!

These reflections are suggested by the words "hunger and thirst," in the passage before us, — words familiar to all, from infancy to the end of life; and describing one of the most wonderful provisions of our Heavenly Father, for the preservation of our lives.

"The appetites of hunger and thirst," says Stewart,

"were intended for the preservation of the individual; and without them, reason would have been insufficient for this important purpose. Suppose, for example, that the appetite of hunger had been no part of our constitution, reason and experience might have satisfied us of the necessity of food to our preservation; but how should we have been able, without an implanted principle, to ascertain, according to the varying state of our animal economy, the proper seasons for eating, or the quantity of food that is salutary to the body?"

> "For this the watchful appetite was given,
> Daily with fresh materials to repair
> This unavoidable expense of life—
> This necessary waste of flesh and blood."

God has not left this to the intellect; but has implanted this craving, which urges us with an irresistible power, to satisfy our wants. "Hunger is not merely *want of food;* for persons, when sick, may abstain long from eating, without *hunger*, or an appetite for food. *Hunger*, therefore, is the pain or uneasiness of the stomach of a healthy person, when too long destitute of food." It is not merely a craving, but an uneasiness and pain, which impels man to seek, without delay, food to satisfy him. The same is true of thirst. All men are acquainted with this appetite, and follow its promptings daily. But those alone know the intensity of this desire, and the greatness of this pain, who have been deprived of food for an unusual and unnatural length of time. Ask the tra-

veller, who has wandered amidst the sandy wastes of Africa, and he will tell you what it is to feel hunger and thirst, and what man would do and suffer, in order to satisfy these. Ask the shipwrecked mariner, and he will describe to you, sufferings from this cause, from which God has so far mercifully preserved you. We must eat and drink, or we must die; there is no alternative. All that a man hath, will he give for his life. In a moment of necessity, he will give all he possesses for a crumb of bread, which he might have spurned before, — for a drop of water, however bitter and disagreeable its taste. When a man is hungry and thirsty, he is urged to satisfy these appetites at once. This takes precedence of all business, pleasure, and profit. The greatest giant in the intellectual world, as well as the most ignorant, must attend to this undeniable and irresistible want.

These words are employed, metaphorically, to express any strong or eager desire. Whenever a man longs for anything with a fervent desire, and makes every effort to gratify his appetite, we may say, and very appropriately, too, that he hungers and thirsts after such an object; and we could not describe his craving in stronger terms. Men do not hunger after bread, merely, for they feel that "man shall not live by bread alone;" yet but few comprehend that he shall live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." They seem to think that gold, and earthly possessions of various kinds, and honor, and pleasure, constitute man's highest good, and will satisfy his hunger, and quench his thirst. After these things do they hunger and thirst.

They pursue them with the most intense ardor; no difficulties can deter them, — they are willing to sacrifice their bodily health, their friends, and often even their conscience, to obtain these things, and to satisfy their insatiable desires. Insatiable indeed! for this hunger seems to become greater by what it feeds on; this thirst burns with greater intensity after each new draught. How often are we made to feel the truth of the Savior's word: "The children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light." Mark the ardor with which the children of this world strive after those things, which the world esteems blessings!

The Savior blesses the hungry and thirsty; but not those who desire food, or anything which the world can bestow upon them. It is well to desire everything needful, and to pursue it constantly and eagerly. However, "but one thing is needful!" There is one thing which is more needful to man than the bread and water which nourish and sustain his body. There is one thing which the soul requires, and without which it cannot be satisfied in time and eternity. This the Savior presents to us in the words: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." The very word of the beatitude is here mentioned: "righteousness." Blessed are they, which do hunger and thirst, not after food and drink, fame, wealth, or pleasure, but after *righteousness.*

And what is meant by this expression? If we regard the term as "purity of heart, and rectitude of

life," and "conformity of heart and life to the divine law," and look into the world for this, we shall discover very little of it among the children of men. We might cry out with David: "Help, Lord: for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men." The Christian beholds the unrighteousness abounding in the world, and he longs to see true righteousness prevailing. Many therefore have interpreted this beatitude of this desire. Blessed are those, who hunger and thirst after a better state of things among men; who desire to behold righteousness governing the intercourse of men; they shall be filled; their ardent desires shall be gratified.

Others explain it of a desire to be dealt with in a righteous manner by others. The godly man must endure much unfairness and unrighteousness; he is often deprived of his rights; injured in his body, worldly goods, and reputation. Is it not natural for him to hunger and thirst after a more righteous treatment of himself?

Man is but too frequently tempted to deal unfairly with his neighbor; to take advantage of his ignorance, or necessities; under the influence of carnal selfishness and covetousness. Blessed are those therefore, some others explain, who hunger and thirst after the blessed virtue of righteousness in their dealings with men, that they may be able to do unto others, what they wish them to do to them. All these things are true. Every man should ardently desire the prevalence of righteousness in the world at large; righteousness for himself in the treatment he receives from others; and

righteousness to guide his own conduct towards his fellow-men. Yet we are confident, that the blessed Reedemer had deeper thoughts than these.

Righteousness is a state of conformity to the divine law. Deut. 6: 25. "And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us!" Our righteousness however does not merely consist in a proper deportment towards God, but also towards men. We must conform to that holy law, which prescribes the state of heart and conduct towards God and man. Though the law of God is holy and spiritual, yet it for the most part, in the Old Testament, refers to actions; and thus too the righteousness of the Old Testament has mostly reference to actions. The Savior in the beginning of the New Testament bids us seek first of all the kingdom of God, and speaks of his righteousness." St. Paul says to the Romans, Chap. 14: 17, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but *righteousness*, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." This righteousness has not merely reference to outward acts, but to the condition of the heart, and the motives which govern our actions. The righteousness of the gospel is something better and holier than that of the religious teachers in the Savior's time. "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Have we this righteousness of heart and life, toward God and man? Listen! "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." There is none righteous,

no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God: they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

However, we have already become familiar with these primary and important truths. He that is poor in spirit, has seen this; he that mourns for sin, has felt this; he that is meek, has been bowed to the dust, on this account. Man is not righteous, or just before God; and he finds by his own experience, that he cannot make himself righteous or do anything to satisfy the demands of a holy God, and his perfect law. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." But there is another righteousness: "the righteousness of God without the law," "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all, that believe." Man cannot find righteousness in himself, or among his brethren. There is but *one* righteous man; righteousness, perfection and holiness, are found in one person alone; even in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord our righteousness. "God imputes the merit and righteousness of Christ to the repenting and believing sinner, releases him, on account of these, from all guilt and punishment, and declares him to be righteous and acceptable to Himself," (Kurtz). "My little children these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the

sins of the whole world." He that is united to Christ by faith, shall possess this righteousness. This righteousness, whereby a sinner is justified, is called "the righteousness of God." This is the righteousness, which alone availeth with God. This is the righteousness, which will be the source from which all the righteousness of subsequent life, before God and man, must flow.

Has man, by nature, a hunger and thirst after this righteousness? Experience and observation prove that he has not. Often when he feels that he possesses no righteousness, he endeavors to work out something of the kind for himself. Yet he finds that by the deeds of the law he cannot be justified before God, or find peace in his own conscience. The Gospel approaches him to call and enlighten. He begins to see more clearly than ever before that he does not possess what he ought to have. There is an aching void somewhere in the heart, something that has not yet been satisfied. He is taught to feel his wretchedness; he casts aside all self-reliance, all righteousness of his own, in a true humility and meekness. Now he feels more than ever, that he does not possess anything that is pleasing to God; he begins to know that he is wretched, miserable and poor, and blind and naked, more than ever before. And now is heard the voice of that desire in his heart of hearts, which often before made itself heard, calling for better things than he himself can give, asking for bread which satisfieth.

Now it is, that the blessed Redeemer in his gospel presents righteousness before the eyes and heart of the

truly poor, mourning, meek one; that righteousness, which can alone satisfy his heart, which will give him the favor of God and man. On the one hand we behold the depth of humility, and godly sorrow for sin, the work of the Lord: on the other, the gift of righteousness, the very blessing which can raise, and console, and satisfy that penitent one. There is a voice within that tells him, this is what I require. This voice comes from God; it is a prompting of the Holy Ghost. But the merciful Savior of Sinners does more than all this; he is as kind to the soul as he has been to the body. He has given the latter the appetites of hunger and thirst, which compel it to seek its own happiness and preservation.

"Man's whole being was penetrated with sin, and poisoned by it, but was not itself converted into sin. An element remained in him, as well as in his descendant, which does not allow of sin, or find pleasure in it, (Rom. 7: 15–16,) but, on the contrary, accuses him of sin, and reproves him (Rom. 2: 14–15). A certain longing after God, deeply rooted even when it is unintelligible, dwells in the soul of fallen man, and his heart finds no peace till it reposes in God." (Kurtz.)

God developes this longing into a want deeply felt, and through his gracious influence, it becomes a *hunger* and *thirst*, an earnest craving for the only food upon which the precious soul can live,—righteousness! He must work within us the will and the power to do.

We all know that hunger cannot make or obtain food; it can only desire and seek: the food itself must be bestowed by some other hand. The very metaphors

employed by the Savior, beautifully teach us, that all that we can do, and are to do, is to seek the heavenly food of the soul, which must be *given by another hand.* We cannot make righteousness; it is placed before us as a gift, which we are to crave. If man could work out a righteousness of his own, or by any works of his could earn it, the Savior would not have made use of the singular expression of the beatitude. He would have said, "Blessed are those who work out their righteousness." But he speaks of that as an object, opposite to which we are to stand, as the hungry and thirsty, desirous of partaking of the rich bounty of God. We must desire, and this desire is to be of the strongest and most intense character, so that it can only be described as a hunger and thirst.

We should not forget here to observe, that man is not merely to hunger after happiness, or even after the bliss of heaven. All this will follow, and is included. *Righteousness* is the great want of his soul. Not only that righteousness may prevail in the world, but that the righteousness of the Gospel kingdom may be his, that God's good and holy will may become his own. Therefore does the Holy Spirit open your eyes; therefore should you mourn, and humble yourself before God. The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness. How many, however, seem to think more of their personal bliss, and of the inheritance beyond the clouds, than of that righteousness, — after which we must hunger and thirst!

Whitby says, "The righteousness here mentioned is by some thought to be that *of faith*, by which we, being

justified, have peace with God; and this is clearly a fit matter of spiritual hunger and thirst. But I think this cannot be the meaning, 1. Because the word righteousness bears no such sense in the gospel, but only in the epistles of Paul. 2. Because the Jews, to whom Christ spake, had no idea that their Messiah was to die; much less that they should be justified by his death. Had Christ spoken of this righteousness, none of them could have understood him;—wherefore the righteousness here intended is that inherent righteousness, which consists in a sincere endeavor to practise all those duties which God requires at our hands, and to eschew that evil which he hath forbidden." Although there is truth in these remarks, we cannot but speak of *righteousness*, in the concentrated light of the entire New Testament. Jesus Christ the righteous—is the Lord our righteousness, and "God imputes the merit and righteousness of this Redeemer to the repenting and believing sinner, releases him on account of these, from all guilt and punishment, and declares him to be righteous and acceptable to Himself." No man is righteous, in the Gospel sense, until he is in Christ Jesus. And it is only when thus justified, that he will be found able to fulfil all righteousness.

There is another thought of great importance. The three first beatitudes present the sinner in the act of a sincere repentance, fulfilling the very first injunction of the Savior and his Apostles, when they say, "Repent!" But this must lead to something more,—he must *believe*. In his humbled state, righteousness is

held before his eyes, as the possession which he needs. He *believes* that this is the one thing needful. He hungers and thirsts after this — desires to possess it with all his mind — reposes his confidence in him who alone can bestow it: for he feels and knows that he cannot buy it, or earn it, but that it must be a gift. — All this is the exercise of faith. When the prodigal thought of his father, and determined to return to that father, he showed that he *believed*, not only that he might return, but that his father would *accept* him. Here was faith. He rose and went. Here was more faith. He made his humble confession, and sought pardon; — still more faith. So, he who has sincerely repented, exhibits faith, by regarding righteousness as the possession he needs; and still more, by seeking it and praying for it, with such eagerness, that it can only be likened to a gnawing hunger and a burning thirst. Righteousness is a *gift;* and is the *faith*, the hunger and thirst which seeks it, not a *gift* likewise. What saith Paul, Ephes. 2 : 8–9? — "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast!" Oh! that every one would ever remember that it is God who, by his Spirit, awakens that hunger and thirst of the soul; and also provides, as a free gift, the righteousness, which can alone satisfy this spiritual appetite.

We are taught to pray, in the Lord's Prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread." Daily must our bodies be supplied with food and drink. We cannot pray in the beginning of the year, or the week; but every

day, that God would give us, day by day, what we need. We cannot eat for a period in advance, nor can we drink for days or weeks to come, — every day our bodies demand our attention. When the new-born child enters the world, it must begin to partake of nourishment; and this exercise is continued until the man is laid in the grave. So is it with the soul. If this frail body needs daily supplies, so does the soul. And if God has given the body a voice, with which it calls for needful supplies every day; so also has he constituted the soul, that it hungers and thirsts for supplies of righteousness. When a man hungers and thirsts for the first time, and is supplied, this supply will not answer for a life-time. Every day must we seek new supplies of grace, Every day must and will the Christian soul pray, "Give me also, this day, my heavenly manna, and the water of life." And when this heavenly food is not received, the soul feels the spiritual pain and uneasiness of hunger and thirst. Not only does the Savior pronounce a blessing upon the man, who for the first time hungers; but upon all those who thus continue to desire, throughout their life. If you are a Christian, you should daily be able to exclaim, with the Psalmist: "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God!" If you know of the water of life, you should daily use the words of the woman of Samaria: "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not." If you know of the bread of life — "the true bread from heaven," you should daily say, with the Jews, in John, 6: "Lord, evermore give us this bread!" Be assured

that as soon as you feel or think, that "now ye are full, now ye are rich," you are in a very dangerous condition. A man may lose his bodily appetite, and live without food for days; but is this a healthy and desirable condition of the body? Is it not an indication of disease? Is it not necessary to consult a physician, and to take measures to restore a healthy appetite? Ah, when your beloved friend has been weak and ill, and he begins to feel a natural hunger, do you not hail it as a sign of returning health? So is it, in the concerns of the soul. If your soul loses its appetite for righteousness, for the grace of God, and for the fruits of the Holy Spirit; rest assured, that there is something wrong within you. Your soul cannot live without spiritual food; yet you are taking no nourishment. What will be the end? You are ill — dangerously ill, if you have lost your spiritual hunger and thirst after righteousness. We express our desires for God's grace in our prayers. If we hunger and thirst no more, we shall not ask to have food and drink. What then?

> Prayer was appointed to convey
> The blessings God designs to give;
> Long as they live, should Christians pray,
> For only while they pray, they live.

If you cease to hunger and thirst, you will cease to pray; and, *you will cease to live.* Christ is the vine; you are a branch. The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in him. Cut off the branch, and the

life-sap will cease to flow. Cut off yourself from the supplies of righteousness, and you shall bear no more fruit. How important, therefore, for every one who professes to be a Christian, to keep alive a healthy hungering and thirsting after righteousness; and to pray God from day to day, to preserve within us the gracious appetite, which his mercy has called into being. Our desire for certain food is increased, when we have tasted its strength and sweetness; shall not the excellency of the food which God places in our mouths and souls, awaken an appetite, which will ever desire, and will be pleased and satisfied with nothing but such food? Shall any man who has tasted the rich provisions of a reconciled father's house, be willing to return among the swine, and to their miserable husks? Blessed, therefore, every one that hungers and thirsts after righteousness!

Blessed: *for they shall be filled!*

How many may now be hungering, in the haunts of poverty, who are never filled, — who long in vain to satisfy their craving appetites. Thousands are hungering and thirsting after wealth; shall they be filled? It is true, the tempter may show them many things, and say unto them, "All these things will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me: you shall be filled!" But he is still the father of lies; and there are thousands ready to bear their testimony to his deceptions. You, who *will* be rich, should remember, that although you hear the assurance that you shall be filled; this promise is broken or unfulfilled, in the majority of cases. To the ambitious man, the world,

and the prince of this world, say, Blessed are you, who hunger and thirst after honor and fame, and spend your days and your strength in this pursuit: you shall be filled! Has this promise been kept to others? Is there a certainty in this? Can you rely upon it; shall you indeed be filled? Mark thousands of your fellow-men, who have run this race, and fought this battle, and have not succeeded. They were not permitted to taste such pleasures. Mark others, who have gained the goal, and wear the crown — who sit upon the pinnacle of fame, and feast already upon the praise of posterity; and ask them, whether they are *filled?* and they will answer, No!

Others will exclaim, Blessed are those that seek happiness and pleasure: for they shall be filled with real delight. Is this true? Remember the prodigal, and the husks with which he would gladly have filled himself. Remember the royal preacher, who also tried to fill himself with such delights; and who says, "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do; and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun." "I said of laughter, it is mad; and of mirth, what doeth it?"

But the promise uttered here, proceeds from lips which spake nothing but truth. Blessed are these: for they shall be filled; heaven has declared it, and heaven and earth shall pass away, before this promise shall be broken. God, who has created this desire, has certainly not done so, in order to disappoint it. The very awakening of such a longing within the soul,

is a proof, that it shall find satisfaction. Does not God himself invite men to come, and partake of the rich bounty of his hands? "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,—and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." Does not this gracious invitation assure us, that if we come, we shall be filled?

They shall be filled, for the good they are seeking is a certain one, and not a mere shadow. As the Savior said to the woman at Jacob's well, "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship." So might we say of many who hunger and thirst in this world. The object they seek is an undefined and truthless one. It is in reality an ignis fatuus, which cannot be obtained. It is a something, which if secured, would afford no real sustenance and delight. But it is very different with the object here pursued. This is no phantom; no castle in the air; no merely ideal blessing. There is a righteousness, although some may sceptically inquire, *what* is righteousness? This is a real, undeniable blessing, and when obtained, will be found to be the very gift which the soul of man requires. As long as man has not found this he lives in a state of uneasiness, and is at war with God, the world, and himself. If he can secure this it will bind him to God, and make him to be at peace with himself and all men. Other possessions may fill some place in his hands, mind, heart, and life; but righteousness is the one thing needful, the good part, which shall not be taken from him. With this, he inherits

every thing, for his Savior has told him, not only to seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; —but that "all these things (food, raiment, etc.) shall be added unto you." This is the only possession which has a satisfying reality. Men who hunger and thirst after this, have selected the proper object of life; they have fallen upon the very thing which their higher spiritual nature requires. They shall be filled, if they obtain this; for it is of a nature to take possession of the entire man, to satisfy and fill his mind, his heart, his mouth, and his life. It is the real philosopher's stone, with which he will be able to prosper always before God and man.

They shall be filled — God's own word is pledged. "For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them." Does he not say: "Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you?" "What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." The blessed Redeemer says: "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." John tells us: "And this is the confidence that

we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him!" Can we desire stronger assurances? They shall be filled, without money and without price. All that is required is, that they should hunger and thirst; feel the strong inward desire, and express it before God in prayer.

They must seek it in the way appointed. God could satisfy our natural hunger and thirst by miraculous means. He could as easily send manna and water from the rock, as he did thousands of years ago. He could feed us, as he did Elijah, by ravens. But he has provided the means, by which our hunger and thirst shall be satisfied. He has done the same in spiritual things. He might satisfy the soul's hunger by bestowing a miraculous blessing. But, he is pleased to present that food and drink, the bread and water of life, which contain heavenly nourishment, and place us in communion with righteousness, so that we may be filled in this way. We shall be filled, if we eat and drink the food provided. Beware, lest you desire an extraordinary provision for yourself like the ancient Syrian, who expected greater things than an order to plunge into Jordan. God has appointed means, by the use of which, alone, man can obtain righteousness, and be filled.

Does this promise imply that we shall be so filled, that we shall need and desire no more? Jesus indeed says: "He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." At Jacob's well he said: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." By this he does not mean, that he shall not thirst for righteousness, but that he shall thirst for nothing else, after he has tasted and obtained this. He that hungers and thirsts shall be filled; the void in his heart shall be filled, — yet this satisfaction is progressive. Though the same in quality, there shall be an increase in quantity. He is not perfect at once. The very figure of a well of water springing up into everlasting life shows, that by the gift of God he has something within, which shall pour out streams which shall penetrate into every portion of his inner and outer life, to satisfy him more and more fully from day to day. And this fountain is supplied by God alone.

They shall be filled, now, and more and more in the future. They shall grow in grace. From being babes in Christ, they shall grow into strong men and women. Paul says: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto

those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." As long as we remain upon earth, we feel imperfections, and righteousness does not transfigure our entire nature. But day after day shall we grow in grace, until we shall reach a place, where in the highest sense of the word, *we shall be filled.* "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness. When they shall be "before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth upon the throne, shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Many men hunger after many different things, and thousands of such wander through the world in gloomy disappointment. In the ancient races, many ran, but one gained the victor's crown. How many disappointments! But did you ever behold a man upon the face of God's earth, who hungered and thirsted after righteousness, *without being filled?*

David said: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Apply it spiritually, and learn, that no one has been forsaken by God, and reduced to

want, who sought righteousness. Do you point out this or that man, as unsuccessful ones? Examine them, and you will find, either, that they have not sought in the proper manner, as James says: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask *amiss*." It is not the true hunger and thirst. Or, they cease desiring, if they do not obtain at once. God says, they shall be filled. But, because they do not immediately obtain such food, and in such supplies, as they expected, their hunger is at an end. Remember the parable of the unjust judge in Luke 18, and the Savior's word: "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Your desire must be a *hunger* and *thirst*, and you shall be filled. There is an abundance for all; for the learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, the high and lowly. No one has ever been disappointed. Remember this, and fix your heart upon righteousness. Yea, "seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Ask wisdom, like Solomon, and you shall be enriched in every respect. Ask in the name of Jesus, and you shall be filled!

Our Father, thron'd above the sky,
  To Thee our empty hands we spread;
Thy children at thy foot-stool lie,
  And ask thy blessings on their head.

With cheerful hope and filial fear,
  In that august and precious name,
By thee ordained, we now draw near,
  And would the promis'd blessing claim.

Does not an earthly parent hear
  The cravings of his famished son?
Will he reject the filial prayer,
  Or mock him with a cake of stone?

Our heavenly Father, how much more
  Will thy divine compassions rise;
And open thine unbounded store,
  To satisfy thy children's cries?

Yes, we will ask, and seek, and press,
  For gracious audience at thy seat;
Still hoping, waiting for success,
  If persevering to entreat.

For Jesus, in his faithful word,
  The upright supplicant has blest;
And all thy saints, with one accord,
  The prevalence of prayer attest.

Bless'd are the souls who thirst for grace,
Hunger and long for righteousness:
They shall be well supplied and fed,
With living streams, and living bread.

CHAPTER V.

The Merciful.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."—Matth. v. 7.

From what has been said concerning the preceding beatitudes, the attentive reader will feel at once, that with this fifth one, we are entering upon new ground, not yet explored. The beatitude last considered, seems to form a turning-point between those that precede, and those which follow. The first three pointed out the rise and progress of religion in the soul, to that period, when it is thoroughly humbled and softened, and in true meekness asks: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" So far, we seem to have been led to examine the way of repentance. In the fourth beatitude, the sinner is not led to still greater depths; he is rather brought to a stand-still, for a moment, as it were, in order to feel the first clear wish, and to take the first effective, forward step, to seek God. Repentance has prostrated him to the dust; faith has raised him up, and turned his face towards the Lord and his righteousness, in a sincere hunger and thirst after righteousness. But, wherever there is faith, there is not only a *promise*, but a *fulfilment* of that promise,

and a reception and enjoyment on the part of the believer. He shall be filled. Though it is a "shall," it begins at once; and he that hungers and thirsts begins at once to taste of the wonderful goodness of his God.

If we now compare this fifth beatitude, with all those which have gone before, we shall observe, that a blessing is here pronounced, not upon persons who are receiving, but upon those, who *give*—who bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness, in their intercourse with men. He that is poor in spirit, is so, principally on his own account; he that mourns, does so for his own sins; he that is meek, is personally humbled before God; he that hungers and thirsts, desires something for himself. In all these attitudes and conditions, man is a seeker. He seeks, until he finds and is filled—at least begins to take in the gifts he sought and needed. And now, his attitude changes; he must begin to *give*—to *send forth*. The merciful already hold a relation to the rest of the world around them.

And when we examine into this, and the preceding beatitude, we shall discover the beautiful, necessary, and instructive connection and harmony between them. What is the great object before the sinner, from the very beginning? Is it not the righteousness, which is only presented in the fourth? Why is he to see his spiritual poverty? That he may desire righteousness. Why must he mourn? Because he has no righteousness. Why is he meek? For the very same reason. And does not the promise connected with each one, point to the same great object?

At the very outset, is promised the kingdom of heaven. And what is its peculiar blessing, if not righteousness? In the second place, he is to be comforted, with the forgiveness of his unrighteousness, and the possession of true righteousness. He is to inherit all the blessings of God, and especially the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. At last, God awakens his hunger and thirst for this same righteousness, and begins to fill him. And what form does this gift first assume, when presented to a hungry and thirsty soul? We can give no better reply, than, *Mercy!* The mercy of God, in forgiving sins — in accepting the unrighteous sinner, and imputing to him the righteousness of Christ. Mercy is the blessing he receives; and the first thing he is to bestow upon others, and exhibit in his walk and conversation, is the gift he has received. He must begin to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. His faith must prove that it possesses life. He receives, that he may give; and lest he should become perplexed about the character of his first gift to others, the Savior graciously points out the way, by blessing him, if he begins the new life, by giving freely, what he has received freely. But, let us endeavor to become acquainted with the character of the merciful. For this purpose, let us ask, what is mercy?

Webster gives us the following definition: "It is that benevolence, mildness, or tenderness of heart, which disposes a person to overlook injuries, or to treat an offender better than he deserves,— the disposition that tempers justice, and induces an injured person to for-

give trespasses and injuries; and to forbear punishment, or inflict less than law or justice will warrant. In this sense, there is perhaps no word in our language, precisely synonymous with *mercy*. That which comes nearest to it, is *grace*. It implies benevolence, tenderness, mildness, pity or compassion, and clemency; but exercised only towards offenders. *Mercy* is a distinguishing attribute of the Supreme Being."

In God, this mercy stands in the most perfect harmony with truth and righteousness. God is infinitely merciful, and infinitely holy and righteous. These two attributes do not, and cannot conflict with each other, in the Divine character. And the death of God's only begotten Son upon the cross, is the greatest exhibition of the meeting of mercy and justice. The sacred scriptures abound with the praises of God's mercy. Whilst John has given utterance to the word, that "God is love;" the Old Testament abounds with declarations and praises of his mercy and goodness. While he visits the sins of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation of those that hate him, he showeth mercy unto thousands of them that love him, and keep his commandments. "The Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty." "Know, therefore, that the Lord thy God, he is God — the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that keep his commandments, to a thousand generations." "Not by works of righteousness which we have done; but according to his *mercy* he saved us." "Let us, there-

fore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." But why should we multiply passages? The scriptures abound in such, describing the mercy of God, in the most encouraging manner. God is moved by infinite benevolence and tenderness, and does not treat us miserable offenders as we deserve. He does not deal with us after our sins, nor reward us according to our iniquities. While justice exclaims, "Cut it down! why cumbereth it the ground?" infinite mercy replies: "Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it." God fully and freely forgives, and remembers our transgressions no more. If we ask, therefore, who is merciful? we reply, our God, in the very highest degree. It is in the exercise of this attribute, that he bears with the sinner. It is mercy that opens his eyes, touches his heart, bows his stubborn will, bears with his waywardness, excites a hunger and thirst within him, has provided a righteousness which will be sufficient, and finally bestows it upon the repentant and believing one. Mercy is the first attribute the accepted sinner comes in contact with. His hungry heart is filled with mercy; and now he must be merciful. And again, we may ask, what disposition is meant by this?

The great lexicographer, in speaking of the word mercy, gives us a fifth definition: "Charity, or the duties of charity and benevolence." Some have taken up this idea, as the one intended by the Savior, in the words before us. Blessed are the men who are charitable, and give alms to the poor, and exercise benevo-

lence to all that are in distress. Works of mercy, in this sense, constitute a man a merciful man. Now, although the merciful man must be charitable and benevolent, this does not by any means exhaust the word *mercy*.

We believe we shall find the truth, by looking at mercy as it is found in God himself. The disposition manifested by God, is to be experienced and exhibited by us, of course, in an infinitely diminished degree. In man, too, it must be a benevolence, tenderness, mildness and compassion towards man. The very etymology of the word teaches us, that the misery of others is to affect our hearts. (Misericordia.) The merciful man will feel a sincere, hearty compassion towards the misery, bodily and spiritual, of his fellow-man. This feeling will dispose him to do all he can, to alleviate this suffering. The truly merciful man will be disposed to overlook injuries, and to treat an offender better than he deserves. In the cultivation and exercise of this grace, he looks to God, as his perfect, though unattainable example. "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." He is not satisfied with a few alms bestowed, and a few sympathising words, or a few warm tears. His heart must feel for all misery, and must be kindly disposed towards all. He is merciful, not from weakness, or because it is constitutional with him; but, because God has been merciful to him, and commands him to be the same to his brethren. He is merciful to all men; in this, too, imitating the universal compassion of his God. He endeavors, as far as he can, to

regulate his mercy, by truth and righteousness; for he remembers that God is thus merciful, and that his word says: "Be not merciful to any wicked transgressors." His heart has become softened, and feels for all the race to which he belongs. Its chords are like the strings of an Æolian harp: they are moved by every sigh and wail of human hearts, and give forth a sad, yet sweetly sympathetic response.

And is it not perfectly natural, and necessary that he should be such a man, with such a heart? The experience through which he has gone, had a tendency to soften his heart. In his natural condition, he was intensely selfish; and many, even of his charitable deeds, were tainted by a hidden selfishness. But he mourned for sin, and became meek, and his heart was bowed down. He began to pant after the living God, and the all-merciful One did not reject him, but filled his heart with the gifts of his mercy. He has been introduced into an atmosphere of divine mercy; shall he not carry some of it with him, when he goes forth among his fellow-men? If the face of Moses shone, after his interview with God, should not his heart overflow with mercy, after having tasted mercy? He owed the king ten thousand talents; he had nothing to pay the debt. Justice commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. He falls down and worships the master. The Lord is moved with compassion, and forgives him the debt. Should we not suppose, that when this servant goes forth, and meets a fellow-servant, who is indebted to him, that the softness he had experienced, would make him truly soft towards his companion?

A sinner is filled with righteousness, and therefore he should be merciful to others. Although you may point out many merciful men among the children of this world, — men of kind hearts, and truly liberal hands; we maintain that it is by the Gospel alone, that the truly merciful man is made. No man can become merciful, in the deep, full meaning of the word, but he who has experienced the mercy of God in his own heart. A heart full of the forgiving love of God, will not be able to be hard to others. Out of the heart are the issues of life. Make that heart tender, and you have gained the point; and nothing can make it tender, but the grace of God.

What a vast field lies open before the merciful! This requires more than meekness and gentleness. Let us call that the negative, and this the positive side of a merciful character. If the heart feels for others, the hands must discover ways and means for the active exercise of mercy. Kindness will not die in an unseen emotion of the heart, or in the sound of a gentle word, or in the warm grasp of the hand, — it will do good, and communicate. Would to God, that more of the truly merciful were walking in the paths marked by the feet of the merciful Savior, who went about doing good — who not only *felt* for all human sorrow, but *did* all to relieve it.

We do not deem it inappropriate to present in this place a quotation from one of the greatest of English poets; which, doubtless, is familiar to all.

> "The quality of mercy is not strain'd—
> It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven,

Upon the place beneath. It is *twice* blessed:
It blesseth him who gives, and him who takes;
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest—it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown.
It is an attribute of God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's,
When mercy seasons justice.
Though justice be thy plea, consider this—
That in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation. We do pray for mercy,
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy.
Why, all the souls that are, were forfeit once;
And he who might the 'vantage best have took,
Found out the remedy. How would you be,
If he who is the top of judgment, should
But judge you as you are? Oh! think on that,
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
Like man new made.
How shalt thou hope for mercy, rend'ring none?"

Is not this beautifully true?

Such, then, being the character and origin of the truly merciful man, let us turn to an examination of the blessing pronounced upon him.

Blessed are the merciful: *for they shall obtain mercy!*

Hitherto, the blessings have been exhibited in the form of gifts, to be bestowed upon those sincerely desiring them. Now, the promise begins to appear in the form of a *reward.* To him that sincerely hungers and thirsts, shall be given the grace of God. But now it is required of him, that he show himself worthy of that grace, as much as he possibly can. It is to become fruitful in him. Its continued possession and

increase shall be dependent upon the manner in which he uses it. By an unworthy possession of God's grace, he may forfeit it again. Yet, in addition to this, he receives the promise of an increase, and this assumes the shape of a reward of faithfulness. It must not be supposed, that the men here spoken of, now receive *mercy for the first time.* We have already said, that a man cannot be *merciful* in the gospel sense, until he has received the unspeakable gift of God's mercy. Because he has been so mercifully dealt with by God, for Christ's sake, his heart and life are filled with mercy. If this is so — if he really exercises himself in the feeling and practice of mercy, he shall *obtain* mercy, more and more. The Lord Jesus Christ has given utterance to a sentiment, which will assist us in understanding the way of God in this. He says: "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and he shall have more abundance." Blessed is the merciful: he hath already — he shall obtain mercy — to him shall mercy be given, and he shall have more abundance.

We must be merciful to our fellow-men, if we wish God to show mercy to us. Mercy is one of the conditions, upon which forgiveness depends. Not as if we would say, that all that we have to do, to obtain God's mercy, is to be merciful to others. We might run into a dangerous error, by misunderstanding the great principle involved here. If our mercy towards others would secure us the favor and pardon of God, we should be working out our own righteousness. Our good works of mercy would be the price, for which we

secure the mercy of God. But the Bible informs us that we are saved by *grace*. And, we may add the word of Paul in the Ep. to the Romans, 11 : 6. "And if by grace, then is it no more of works : otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more of grace : otherwise work is no more work." We hold fast to the fundamental principle, that by grace we are saved through faith ; and that, not of ourselves, it is the gift of God : not of works, lest any man should boast.

Yet mercy to our fellow-men is a condition of our own forgiveness. Mercy towards others, must be an element in the disposition of the man who shall receive the kingdom of God and his righteousness. There can be no true poverty of spirit, no true mourning for sin, no true meekness, without an element of forgiveness and softness towards men. How can a man be considered truly penitent, a truly humbled sinner, who bears in his heart hate, revenge, malice, and all the elements of an unmerciful spirit? It will certainly be understood as gospel truth, that God will not, and cannot bestow his mercy in Christ Jesus upon any man, who does not sincerely repent of his sins, and believe in this Savior. And it is equally true, that the man who is unmerciful in disposition and conduct, proves conclusively, that he is no sincere penitent. Before we therefore come to God, we must feel disposed to do to others as we pray God to do unto us. Have you ever considered the Savior's language in another part of this glorious sermon on the mount, in this connection ? " Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there

rememberest, that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way: first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." God does not forgive us our trespasses, *because* we forgive those who trespass against us, in the sense, that this is the *only*, or the *great* reason why he forgives. He forgives us for his mercy's sake, for Christ's sake. But, he will certainly not forgive us in the first place, if we lack a spirit of forgiveness; and he will not continue his mercy *afterwards*, unless we exercise mercy towards others.

But in considering this beatitude, we regard the man, who has already obtained mercy, who possessed a merciful spirit, but who is now encouraged to continue in this spirit, — yea, is told that if he continues to feel and act so, he shall continue to obtain mercy.

From whom shall the merciful obtain mercy? It seems scarcely necessary to propose such a question after the remarks already made. However we ask it, because the question has been answered differently.

Some have supposed, that the promise has reference to men. They shall obtain mercy from men. Daily observation and experience prove the truth of such a principle. The merciful shall and does, as a general thing, obtain mercy. The Savior has said: "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." As the meek and the gentle shall prosper most in the world, so is it with the merciful man. There is a chord in every human heart, that responds

to the exhibition of mercy. He who pities others, will experience their sympathy, should he ever be placed in circumstances to need it. He whose hand is liberal in deeds of mercy and benevolence, will find friends starting up around him in his own distress. He that knows how to forgive and forget an injury, will be the most likely to experience similar treatment, when he errs. Although there may be ungrateful hearts in the world, and some men, who cannot appreciate such a spirit, the great mass of men will smile upon the merciful man. "He that despiseth his neighbor sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he." "Mercy and truth preserve the king; and his throne is upholden by mercy." And this blessed power of mercy will show itself to all men, as well as to the rulers of the earth. How well would it have been for many of the dethroned and exiled rulers of this earth, had they exercised mercy in the day of their prosperity and power! Then too would they have obtained mercy, at the hands of those whom they had blessed and pardoned. Ye that are blessed with an abundance of this world's goods, be kind unto all men, do good and communicate, show mercy wherever, and whenever you can. You know not how soon, and from whom you may desire mercy. Then when the day of adversity comes, you shall obtain mercy. The very beasts of the earth, the fierce lion of the desert, and the faithful domestic dog, acknowledge and remember kindness, and in their own way show mercy to those, who have at some former time been merciful

to them. And if mercy will even secure the kindness of the brutes that perish, shall not the exercise of mercy towards all men, of all classes, under all circumstances, be the surest way of obtaining that mercy from them, which we all may need sooner or later? We need each other's mercy. "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

But, while all these things are true, and we may be permitted to make such an application of the promise, we believe that it principally and primarily refers to that mercy, which we shall obtain from God.

If we need the mercy of God in the beginning, we need it just as much throughout life. It is God's infinite and undeserved mercy, which graciously provided the way of Redemption. Mercy formed the plan of salvation before the foundation of the world. Mercy sent Christ into the world. Mercy has provided the gospel. Mercy ordered all the circumstances of time, place and family, in which the Gospel made its first approaches to us. Mercy opened our hearts to the influence of truth, and made us poor in spirit, godly mourners, meek, hungry and thirsty, and merciful. And, if mercy has worked everything within us, and around us, shall we need mercy no more? Because we have been *filled*, are we so full that we need no more? Is it not rather true, that when we have tasted God's mercy, and realize our own weakness and helplessness, we feel that "without Him we can do nothing?" Can we do without mercy—God's mercy?—

Yes, I may,
When I've no guilt to wash away,
No tears to wipe, no good to crave,
No fears to quell, no soul to save.

As well might the flower, which has been developed into beauty and fragrance by the sunshine and dew, attempt to retain this, and to increase, without further assistance from these. As well might the branch, which has attained a fair size by abiding on the vine, attempt to grow and to produce fruit, by being severed from the vine. As well might a man expect to retain his health, and to increase in bodily strength, by abstaining from food. We need the mercy of God every day. Our bodies and our souls are entirely dependent upon it.

As long as you can pray the Lord's prayer honestly, and can utter the petition "forgive us our trespasses" with a consciousness, that you still have trespasses, and need forgiveness; so long you need the mercy of God. As long as you must lament the many imperfections of your heart and life, falling far short of what you ought to be before God, so long have you need of his mercy. You have as much reason as the Psalmist, to exclaim: "O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice, and be glad all our days." "Help me, O Lord my God: O save me according to thy mercy." "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name, give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake." "Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness;

according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." With Jeremiah you may say every day, and every year: "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness."

When you have no sins to be forgiven; when your obedience is perfect in thought, word, and deed; when you have no trials and difficulties; when you are able to give yourself food, raiment, health, friends, and everything you need; when you can die in your own strength; and when you are perfectly ready for the judgment-seat: then, and not until then, can you do without God's mercy!

Truly do we need it. Shall we obtain it? Let our past meditations reply. Let your own experience testify. God is an All-merciful Father—who pitieth us far more than an earthly father pitieth his children. The very name "Father" speaks volumes. Speaking to the Christian, upon this stage of the beatitudes, who has tasted of God's righteousness tempered with mercy, we say—you shall obtain mercy in future, the very kind and degree of mercy which your nature and circumstances demand. You *shall* obtain. God's word is pledged. He is faithful and just. "The word of the Lord is right; and all his works are done in truth!" He will forgive your numerous short-comings; pour out his spirit; guard you in the hour of temptation; deliver you from all evil; supply you with all needful temporal blessings; give you the victory in the end, over death and the grave; speak words of mercy to you at the

great last reckoning; and bestow upon you the crown of righteousness, in infinite mercy. All this you shall obtain. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but this promise shall stand, until every part of it is fulfilled. The mercy you have already tasted, shall be a proof and earnest of that which shall be yours in future.

They shall obtain mercy,—but, upon one condition; and a very reasonable and easy one it appears to be. They shall obtain mercy, if they show mercy unto others. This is required as a proof that they still possess true repentance, and a living faith. What can be more reasonable than such a condition? Should not every one be willing to be unto others, what he expects God to be to himself? Yet, alas! how many are daily recipients of the unspeakable mercies of God, who nevertheless are utterly merciless towards their brethren. God therefore fixes this condition. If you are truly mercifnl, for my sake, I shall continue to be merciful to you. I shall consider you worthy of my favor, and will even reward a disposition and conduct, which you possess through my mercy. Everything you do to others in a spirit of love and mercy shall be remembered and rewarded. But,—you also possess the power of rejecting and forfeiting my mercy. Then you shall not only not enjoy *future* supplies, but even that which you have, shall be taken away. This you shall lose, if you are unmerciful to others. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

In dwelling upon this subject, how can we omit a reference to the remarkable parable in the 18th Chap. of St. Matthew, in which this duty of showing mercy to others, because we have received mercy, and the terrible punishment of the unmerciful is so strikingly exhibited. "Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents: but, forasmuch as he had not to pay, his Lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt." Is not this an excellent picture of every sinner before God? How enormous our debt; how utterly unable are we to do anything to pay it! God *forgives* us, freely and fully, for Christ's sake, because we, by our works or righteousness, could never wipe out our guilt!

But mark the conduct of the servant to his fellow-servant. "But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants which owed him an hundred pence;" (how trifling the sins committed against *us*, when compared with those which we have committed against God!) "and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, have patience with me, and I will

pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their Lord all that was done." And now let us particularly mark the master's conduct towards the unmerciful servant, which illustrates God's language in the beatitude. "Then his Lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me. Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him." The Savior enforces the lesson of the parable, in the following closing words: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

The words of David's song are still true: "With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful!" If you, beloved reader, wish to forfeit God's mercy, it is only necessary to be unmerciful.

Mercy to others, according to the position of this beatitude, is to be the very first exercise of our faith. God requires a living faith, active in and by love. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." Mercy is the very first outflowing of our faith. Our heart, when we believe, is filled

with mercy, and now out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." If it fails to show itself, there is none there. Or if divine mercy, by flowing through our hearts, becomes so changed and polluted, that it flows forth in bitterness and hardness, God will take his mercy from us. Oh! that God would make us truly merciful, so that we might obtain mercy! We shall obtain it. Every act of mercy, as before remarked, will be remembered, and rewarded, if not always on earth, finally and certainly in heaven. Can we close this beatitude more appropriately, than by presenting that last scene, where divine mercy shall be obtained by the merciful, the kind and compassionate, which the Savior describes in Matthew 25th? "Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Though we shall be saved through Christ alone, and it will be a mercy, that we

enter the heavenly Canaan, God will reward every work of mercy. We shall rest, but our works shall follow us. Blessed are the merciful; blessed in their own feelings of satisfaction, for it delighteth the heart to do good; and it finds, that it is more blessed to give than to receive; blessed among men, for they shall obtain mercy from them; but most of all blessed, because they shall obtain mercy from God, for body and soul—for time and eternity.

> "Bless'd are the men, whose hearts still move,
> And melt with sympathy and love.
> They shall themselves from God obtain,
> Like sympathy and love again."

CHAPTER VI.

The Pure in Heart.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."—Matth., v. 8.

All these words of the Savior administered a merited rebuke to the Pharisees and Scribes, as well as wholesome instruction to the disciples, and all around him. Perhaps the words of the eighth verse contained a special reference to those hypocrites, who boasted of their outward purity, whilst they were impure within. Christ subsequently said to them: "Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward; but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men; but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." "Ye make clean the outside of the cup, and of the platter; but within, they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee! cleanse first, that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also." We all know, that the Jewish ceremonial laws enjoined many washings and purifications. All these regulations were intended and calculated, not merely

to secure a bodily purity; but to teach the necessity of that inward purity of heart, and outward purity of conduct, which God regards with favor. But very many of the Jews, beside those particular classes of persons mentioned by the Savior, had lost sight of the inward and spiritual demands of the law. They were scrupulous in their observance of symbolical rites; but omitted that which was signified. The true Israelite of the olden time, and such as Simeon, and Anna the prophetess, in later times, understood the will of the Lord, who is not satisfied with the cleanness of our hands, and the purity of our garments and dwellings. David beautifully expresses this, in Psalm 24. He asks: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?" Mark his reply: "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." The same sentiment is expressed in Psalm 15. They knew, in those days, that "truly, God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart." The Pharisees seemed to have forgotten the indignant language of Jehovah, recorded in the first chapter of the prophecies of Isaiah: "Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths; the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with: it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine

eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil. Learn to do well: seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." The Lord desired more than a purity which could be produced by water, even the purity of heart and life. And why all this? The direction given by God, to his servant Samuel, in the house of Jesse, when about to anoint a king for God's people: "The Lord seeth not as man seeth: for man looketh on the outward appearance; but the Lord looketh on the *heart.*"

Solomon says: "Keep thy heart with all diligence: *for out of it are the issues of life.*" Otto von Gerlach says: "According to the scriptural manner of speaking, the *heart* is not merely the seat of feeling, but of the disposition; and that which places man in communion with God; consequently the seat of that higher knowledge, and practical wisdom, which is one with the higher divine love. The 'life' too, is especially that higher, inner, eternal life, which is the same as true happiness in God." And one, who is infinitely greater and wiser than Solomon, has given the same importance to the heart, and made it the fountain, from which flow good and evil streams. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." "A good man, out of the good treasure of the *heart*, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things." How

vastly important, therefore, that this ever-flowing fountain should be pure! What would it avail, if the stream, throughout its course, should be purified again and again, if the fountain sends forth continued supplies of impure water? How very needful, that the secret treasury of the mysterious human heart should be well supplied with pure and beneficial things! Therefore, does the Savior say, Blessed are the pure in heart! But what does he mean by this *purity of heart?*

Some have understood it to refer to those who are without guile in their intercourse with their fellow-men—who think no evil, but are pure in their conduct towards all. Others again, regard the expression as referring to sincerity towards God. Others explain it of a freedom from the sins of the flesh. Others again understand by it, an absolute purity. Those are pure in heart, whose conscience accuses them of no sin. The great question here arises, whether we are to understand this expression of an *absolute*, or a *relative* purity?

Are we pure by nature? The sacred scriptures, and our own experience and observation, emphatically reply in the negative. Can we point to any one in our midst, who is perfectly pure in life, and heart—who has no stain upon his moral and religious character, before man, and the eyes of God? We believe not. We believe there was but one perfectly pure and spotless life upon the earth—in the person of the Savior. And we also believe, that his heart was the only one that was absolutely pure. He was like us

in every respect—sin alone excepted. Though a man has hungered and thirsted after righteousness, and has been filled, we believe, according to the Scriptures, that he will not only at times exhibit imperfections in his life, but that his heart will be conscious of impurity. Perfect purity, and exemption from all sin, is not a present possession, but something which we are striving for. Of all God's saints, whose lives are preserved in the sacred volume, we do not read once, that there was a single one among them, who was considered by others, or considered himself, perfectly pure. If any of us should pretend to say, that we have no sin, the truth would not be in us, and we would be deceiving ourselves. The regenerated child of God, when honestly examining his own heart, may exclaim with David, "Who can understand his errors?" and may close with the prayer, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults!" The most experienced Christian must be conscious of internal spiritual conflicts, and that the purity of the heart is not always victoriously maintained. The multiplied passages of Scripture, and our own consciousness, prove incontestably, that in the present life, there is not, and cannot be a perfect *purity* of heart, in the sense of absolute sinlessness. It may be objected, that we read, 1 John, 3, 9: "Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." Are we, therefore, to regard the true Christian as sinless? John supposes the contrary, since even in Christianity, he still admits the need of forgiveness, and of progressive purification

from sin. "If we confess our sins," is his language—that is, are penetrated by a consciousness of the sin that still cleaves to us, and are filled with a feeling of penitence,—"God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." We must, therefore, take the following view of John's doctrine:—though the Christian, as such, in reference to his life founded on communion with Christ, though his divine indwelling life cannot itself be affected by sin, yet as it is engrafted on a sinful nature, which is continually opposed to it, it is always subject to being disturbed by its incursions, from which it can only be preserved by maintaining a constant warfare." "In this manner we may easily explain the apparent contradiction in John's language, when he says that whoever sinneth, knoweth not Christ; and yet speaks of the forgiveness of sins as needed by every Christian, and ready to be imparted to him. The life of the believer is distinguished from the life of the natural man by this—that it is animated, not by the principle of sin, but of the divine life; and hence what is sinful, appears only as something still cleaving to him, and therefore always opposed by him." (Neander.)

The *reign of sin* is positively excluded in the true believer; but not so every movement and activity of sin. Therefore, we need a propitiation for our sins. The regenerated one cannot stand in *his own* strength; the remains of sin are still so strong, that he must continue to seek refuge and strength in Christ. He cannot be a believer, and live in the *habit* of sin. But to be perfectly spotless—pure in thought, word and

deed, is something which the Scriptures ascribe to no one, but Jesus Christ.

The word in the original, translated *pure*, expresses that which is simple—that which is the opposite to something colored or mixed. This gives us the idea of *sincerity*, as opposed to all hypocrisy. The man who is *sincere* and *single-hearted*, seems to express the meaning of the word before us. In this sense of *sincerity*, the word seems to be used in connection with the *heart*, and *conscience*. "Now, the end of the commandment is charity, out of a *pure heart*, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." 1 Tim. 1 : 5. "Holding the mystery of the faith, in a *pure conscience*." Chap. 3 : 9. "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers, with *pure conscience*." 2 Tim. 1 : 3; and, 2 : 22. "Here is meant that sincerity, which honestly desires to do the will of God; but which will also show itself as true candor, in the intercourse with men."

While we cannot, therefore, believe in an absolute purity of heart, in the sense of sinlessness, we believe that the Savior requires those, whose *hearts*, principles, motives, and dispositions are sincere before him. As such, there must be a high degree of purity, and a constant aim and endeavor, with the help of the Spirit of God, to become more and more pure, and not only not to suffer sin to have dominion over our bodies, but also to keep it from our hearts: for, out of the heart are the issues of life. God does not merely regard your external deportment; he looketh to your heart, and requires that this should be pure—*sincere*, in all

its desires, in all its feelings. It is true, that none of us will be able to say, that all the desires and sentiments which pass through our hearts, are perfectly sincere at all times. But it is to be our endeavor, by God's grace, that our hearts may become so. We may therefore regard this beatitude, as indicating an important and higher step, in the life of the Christian. It is the great aim of the Christian religion, not merely to transform the outer man, but to reach, and change the very source and fountain of his entire being. Unless the heart is changed, the man is not changed. You may add, and take away, as much as you please, in external deportment and life; unless you can change the character, the motives and dispositions of the heart, you have accomplished nothing. Herein is the power of the Gospel — that it goes to the very centre of man — strikes to his heart, breaks, changes, purifies and possesses that; and from this inmost citadel, and throne of man, dictates its laws to the whole man. It is in the *heart*, that God awakens the hunger and thirst after righteousness; and it is the heart, which first tastes, and is filled more and more. All true spiritual life begins within. It is here that the leaven must be deposited, and whence it will work forward, and leaven the whole mass.

"The heart is the primary organ of the blood's motion in an animal body. From this organ, all the arteries arise, and in it all the veins terminate. By its alternate dilatation and contraction, the blood is received from the veins, and returned through the arteries; by which means, the circulation is carried on,

and life preserved." The heart, figurately and spiritually speaking, fills the same important place. All the food of God's grace, and the atmosphere of his love, are to purify our hearts; and the heart is again to send forth life and warmth to every part of our spiritual being. It is to become more and more purified, from day to day, and to be sincere and single before God. Our most excellent actions have a value, only in as much as they flow from our hearts. Our devotions before God shall only be accepted, if they proceed from pure hearts.

Many, in explaining the beatitudes, fail to point out any connection between this, and the preceding one. Yet we believe that such a connection exists. Man has hungered and thirsted after righteousness, and has been filled. He has experienced the unspeakable mercy of God in Jesus Christ. He is required to show his sincerity, as well as his worthiness, by bringing forth fruits meet for repentance and faith, and to be merciful to others, as he has received mercy, and also, that God may continue to prove merciful to him. He is to exhibit this mercy in the various ways pointed out in our previous meditations. He is to forgive the transgressor, and to help, wherever he can. But, lest any one might fall into the ruinous error of supposing, that God would be perfectly satisfied with deeds of kindness and charity, the Savior seems to add this word by way of caution. Wo to you—Pharisees, who think, that your alms and the like, will secure you the mercy of God. Blessed are the *pure in heart!* God requires *sincerity*, and

single-heartedness. Those alms, and deeds of mercy must come from the heart; they must be prompted by heaven-born *charity*, that true love of man which is founded in, and flows from, a true love to God. But, the same is also said by way of admonition and instruction to every true disciple. It is not enough to be merciful, you must also be pure in heart. Your motives, desires, and dispositions, must be sincere before God, for he searcheth the heart.

It is also a word of most excellent encouragement. No matter, although you are not able to do as much as others have done, and as you desire to do, God blesses the purity and sincerity of motive, the singleness of purpose, and the uprightness of the heart. Although you may behold imperfections in your heart,— and must pray, that God may cleanse it, and give you a new heart; blessed are you if your heart is sincere.

We, however, also regard this beatitude as really describing a higher stage, a step farther in advance, in the Christian character. If we should think of nothing but that purity of heart, which is the absence of every spot and wrinkle, then this would be something in the distance altogether, not yet attained, and not attainable in the present life. Purity in heart, would therefore be an object of desire, and no more.

If this is really so, all that has been said concerning the progression observable in all the beatitudes, would prove groundless. So far, we trust, we have been able to point out a progress. But here it would fail. If purity of heart is a something in the future

altogether, to be desired, we really seem to stand upon the same stage, as when we hunger and thirst after righteousness. Ascending to the place occupied by verse 8th, we should expect the Lord to refer to something already possessed, to which a promise and reward is given. The merciful man is *already* merciful;—the *peace-maker* is already such; must not the *pure in heart* refer to a present state also? Undoubtedly! Blessed are the men, who show their faith, their true discipleship, by manifesting now already, sincerity and uprightness of heart, in all their deeds, before God and man. They have not only the outward deeds of mercy, but, what is of higher value, the purity of heart which gives it real value, which stamps it with an heavenly impress. It is a qualification which the heart possesses now, and which must grow in power and perfection constantly.

How shall our hearts be purified? Acts, 15:9. we read the expression, "purifying their hearts by faith." God will cleanse our hearts; and if we live in his service, in an active faith, we shall be strengthened in the inner man. We cannot make ourselves sincere, single-hearted, pure, and more and more holy; this is God's work, by His Holy Spirit. We must become more sanctified, and our continued prayer must therefore be, "Sanctify us through thy truth: thy word is truth." But we must co-operate with God in all these things; our faith must be obedient. It will be necessary not only to guard the heart, but all the avenues that lead to the heart. We must lay aside every thing, that may have a tendency to pollute our

hearts, "putting off concerning the former conversation the old man which is corrupt, according to deceitful lusts, and putting on the new man, which after God is created in true holiness." We cannot think of the pure heart, without combining with it the *clean hands*. There can be no purity of heart, that does not influence the conduct. He that is pure in his devotion to God, sincere in wishes and motives before Him, will walk a consistent life in every respect. "The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thine whole body shall be full of light; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness; if then the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

The pure in heart therefore, although we by no means consider them perfect, occupy the true position towards God, and consequently also towards man. Their hearts are God's, they serve him in sincerity, and sincerely strive after holiness; not a mock-holiness in externals, but a true holiness of heart and life.

Blessed are all such; happy in the testimony of their own hearts; happy in the enjoyments already theirs, and in the prospect placed before them by a gracious Redeemer. If they occupy a higher place than all who have preceded them, they also enjoy a more glorious promise:

"*For they shall see God!*

It was deemed a high privilege in the East, to stand in the presence of the king, and to behold his face. The queen of Sheba said to Solomon: "happy

are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom." It is mentioned particularly of the seven princes of Persia and Media spoken of in Esther I. that they "saw the king's face." Kings upon the earth, in all their state and magnificence, are but feeble shadows and types of that King of kings, and Lord of lords, who sitteth upon the throne of the Universe. If it is a high privilege to see these earthly potentates, how much more so — to behold the great God. Hereafter, his servants "shall see his face."

In the Old Testament, however, we read that God said: "thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live." In the first Chap. of the gospel of John we read: "no man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Christ, in the same gospel, says: "not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God: he hath seen the Father." Paul, in the sixth Chap. of his first epistle to Timothy, speaks of God, as of the Lord of lords, "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see." Yet here have we the promise, that the pure in heart shall *see* God.

The word *see* is not only applied "to the sense of vision, by which we perceive external objects, but also of inward perception, of the knowledge of spiritual things. So that this passage may mean, the pure in heart shall understand the mysteries of salvation, they

shall perceive the loving kindness of the Lord towards them in this life, and shall at length perfectly enjoy him in heaven." To *see* God may mean, to enjoy the most intimate communion with him. This can only be done by those who possess the proper disposition. We are told, that "holiness" is that "without which no man shall see the Lord." Those who are of a pure heart, shall already in this world *see* God, understand his character and will, and enjoy intimate and sweet communion with him. These are the men who shall in spirit ascend into the hill of the Lord, and stand in his holy place. In the purity of heart they possess the inner spiritual eye, which can behold the beauty and goodness of the Lord. But the beholding, and enjoyment of exalting communion with God upon earth, is but a glimpse, and feeble foretaste of that vision which heaven shall present. "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is."

No man upon the earth has seen God; so much is certain. Of course we speak here of seeing him with the bodily eye, and not of that spiritual seeing, and communion, which every pure-hearted believer enjoys in this world. But, while this has not been granted to any one on earth; shall the believer *literally see* God hereafter, in Heaven his dwelling-place?

Many have replied, that we shall not only behold

him mentally and spiritually, but with our eyes, face to face. Our bodies shall be changed, and glorified, "like unto Christ's glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." No man upon earth could see him, and retain life; but when his entire nature shall be transformed, glorified, and fitted for the higher and spiritual atmosphere of heaven, he shall be able to see face to face.

Others however object, that the spirituality of God's being renders all outward vision entirely impossible. They say, that although God manifested his glory to the eyes of some of his saints in the Old Testament, such a manifestation in heaven hereafter would be no advance above what was granted on earth. It was on this account that many of the earliest interpreters of the word of God in the Christian church explained this to be a metaphorical expression, describing a distinct knowledge of God in the world to come; so that it would only be a higher degree of that which the Christian possesses upon the earth. In investigating this subject, it will be felt that very much, yes all, depends upon our views of the Being of God, and of the nature of the glorified bodies of the saints.

"In 1 Cor. 13: 12, Paul speaks of an *enigmatical* seeing *through a glass;* and opposes to this, a seeing *face to face*, a knowledge *in part*, to which he opposes a knowing on the part of man, even as also he is known. From this, we learn that we are to regard this seeing as an absolute knowledge of God; and that

this is brought about by the presence of God. We are now able to comprehend its relation to faith. The certainty of faith also depends upon the presence of the thing believed, in the spirit of man; otherwise faith could not be the absolute certainty, or the *substance* of that which is hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. But faith is still connected with hope; and therefore is only the incomplete presence of that which is believed. When the possession comes, hope is at an end, "for we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen, is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? So the *seeing of God* is nothing else but the completion and fulfilment of that which is already partly possessed by faith. But by this transition from a partial and an incomplete, to a complete possession, the manner of *knowledge* is also changed. When we apply this from Paul, to the words of the beatitude, we shall find that it will assist us in understanding them. According to the verse before us, purity and sincerity of heart is the condition upon which the complete sight of God depends. This is in accordance with the words in the Epistle to the Hebrews, Chap. 12: 14—"Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." The pure and sincere will is, therefore, the organ, both for faith and for sight. It may be regarded as the mirror in which the Being of God appears. If this "sight" requires a previous sincerity and purity of heart and will, it does not merely refer to the sphere of knowledge, but to all the powers and faculties of the spirit of man. Now, although Paul refers to "seeing," as something which

pre-eminently belongs to the future, we may speak of "seeing God," here already. For if the difference between faith and sight, is no other than that of an elementary and fully developed presence of God in the spirit, then, in a certain sense, faith may already be called sight; and Paul himself calls it a seeing—albeit through a glass, and darkly. Add to this, what he says, 2 Cor. 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (Tholuck.)

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."—"Beloved, now are we the sons of God!" Now already, by faith—by his gracious adoption and regeneration. As sons, we know the Father, and we behold his face in the Lord Jesus Christ, "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." We behold his face—his reconciled countenance. We see his glory, wisdom, power and goodness. We possess a knowledge of him. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things; yea, the deep things of God." Philip said to the Savior, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Jesus said unto him, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how

sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" We have not seen the Lord Jesus face to face; but we know him, and have experienced his presence. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

But, although we are the sons of God now, we dwell in faith, not in sight. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." It doth not appear to the world at large; it doth not appear fully in the pages of God's holy word; it doth not fully appear in the mind and heart of the Christian; it doth not appear in the countenance or form of God's most faithful saints, upon their dying beds. It is hidden by God's will. The veil which conceals the vastness and glory — the pursuits and delights of our future, is not yet removed. We have not seen it, and yet we *know* our faith is so strong, that we *know* that when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another."

What this vision of God, this "beatific vision," includes, who is able to declare? We know that we shall be introduced into the very presence of God. We shall see every thing, which we have here believed. We shall forever enjoy, what we hoped for on earth. We shall know God as he is, What a vast difference between the conceptions of the Divine character, entertained by the child, and the full-grown and enlight-

ened man! Now are we all children—the wisest and best in our midst: but then, we shall lay aside all childish thoughts and conceptions, all darkness and error. We shall know as we are known. We shall understand more fully the glorious Being of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We shall obtain a new insight into his glorious and infinite government. We shall drink more deeply of his inexhaustible love and goodness. We shall dwell within the very light of truth, holiness, and grace, which cometh forth from the Father of lights and giver of all good and perfect gifts. We shall know more, and enjoy more of God, than Moses or Elijah did upon the earth. "I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." "And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun: for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever." Then we shall be introduced into the Holy of Holies of the heavenly temple, and enjoy bliss which mortal tongue cannot declare, nor human heart conceive. Who does not feel a burning desire to be admitted to such glorious privileges? Who does not desire to break through the darkness and mists which now envelope the human

mind? It has been said that the greatest study of man is man. We prefer reading, that the greatest study of man is *God!* This should engage his noblest powers on the earth, although the language of the hymn expresses a great, and never-to-be-forgotten truth: —

> Great God, in vain man's narrow view
> Attempts to look thy nature through;
> Our lab'ring pow'rs, with rev'rence own
> Thy glories never can be known.

It is in vain; yet we must desire to know Him and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. With each advancing step, we must acknowledge that infinite heights are yet towering above us. In that higher world, our eyes will become brighter, our souls better fitted to read the mysteries of God. We shall no longer hear his teaching voice in the distance, nor trace his finger in the perishable things of nature; we shall *see* God, and in his immediate presence, and under the guidance of his own grace, we shall know him better, and enjoy him more. Though Angels and Arch-angels, who have seen him through countless ages, cannot fully, even yet, trace his boundless mind, and never shall be able to comlpete this work; we shall unite with them, in the loftiest contemplations, and holiest enjoyments. To *see* God, is indeed the very sum of all knowledge and bliss!

Again we repeat the question of the Psalmist, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?" and his answer, "he that

hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation."

The apostle John, after describing the glorious present, and still more glorious future, which the Christian hopes for, adds, in the same spirit, "and every man that hath this hope in him, *purifieth* himself, even as he is pure. Blessed are the *pure in heart*, for they shall see God." This is the great condition upon which the beatific vision depends. Holiness alone can see holiness. There must be a disposition, and an adaptation in our hearts, before we can see and enjoy God. It is only a heart, which is filled with God's light and love, that can see God here; it is only such a heart, that shall see him hereafter. The sight in heaven, is but a completion and fulfilment of that which we possess here. The kingdom of God must find a place in our heart here, before our hearts shall find a place in the kingdom of glory hereafter. There is something in and about the eye, which fits it for receiving and enjoying the light of the Sun. There must be something in the heart, that will render it capable of such a heavenly vision. How important therefore that we should look to our hearts, out of which are the issues of life! How important that these should be right towards God! May God's righteousness not only fill us with mercy, making us merciful to others, but may our hearts be purified by it, so that we may walk sincerely before God.

Let us not put assunder what God hath joined together. There can be no *purity of heart*, without a *cleanness* of hands. Wherever you find the first, you will be sure to find the last, for out of the heart are the issues of life. Do not boast of a pure heart, if your life contradicts your declarations. Let us pray God: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me!"

Blessed are the pure, whose hearts are clean
From the defiling pow'r of sin:
With endless pleasure they shall see
A God of spotless purity.

CHAPTER VII.

The Peace-makers.

"Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God." — Matth., v. 9.

Although the Roman Empire enjoyed peace at the time of the Savior's birth, the age was a turbulent and warlike one. Men were not warm lovers of peace, but preferred war; and if their hands were not engaged in real wars, they delighted in the mimic ones of the arena. The Prince of Peace entered the world at a time when the most warlike nation of antiquity ruled over the greater part of the known world. The people, to whom he belonged, were known to be a violent and rebellious nation. They had learned war in the deserts of Arabia. They had cultivated this spirit in the invasion of the Holy Land. Their boundaries were preserved by the power of the sword. They were surrounded by enemies; met with terrible defeats; were led into captivity; returned to build their demolished city and temple, with the sword in hand; and had still found use for it under the Maccabean princes. The Holy Land had at length become a province of the great Roman Empire; but the masses of the Jewish people burned with indignation, and were

ready for every outburst of rebellion. More than once before the Savior's time, had they risen in arms, —only to be subdued anew.

It may readily be supposed, that if such was the turbulent character of the age, and of the people of Israel, in political matters,— the spirit pervading the various grades of society could not have been a very peaceable and mild one. It was therefore perfectly proper and necessary, that the blessed Redeemer should urge the love of peace upon the multitudes by whom he was surrounded. He had before said, Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth; and now he adds, Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God.

But the Savior did not merely utter these words for the benefit of his own age, or the hearers who surrounded him at that time; he desired to impress them upon the minds and hearts of all future generations. The word of Christ, and our own reason, judging from experience and observation, unite in pronouncing a deserved benediction upon all peace-makers. Let us endeavor to understand what constitutes such a character.

In many translations of this word, the meaning is not as clearly expressed as in our own. Many merely speak of the *peaceful*, or the *peaceable*. But the word means more than this: the character referred to by Christ, is a peace-*maker*— one who does not only love peace, and preserve it as much as he can, but one who labors to make and promote it.

It was remarked, on a previous page, that some men

were naturally and constitutionally meek and mild. The same may be said in regard to a peaceable disposition. Some men are averse to all quarrelling and warfare; they shun it wherever and whenever they can; they live peaceably with all men, and never interfere, by word or deed, or even looks, with the comforts or opinions of any one. They never meddle in quarrels, but studiously keep themselves aloof from all the contentions of men. They glide along peaceably in the Church, in the state, and in their own families. The very sound of contention excites their nervous system, and they fly from these things, as they would from the city of the plague. This is owing to their natural temperament. They do not avoid discord and war on account of principle, nor do they make any strong efforts to *make peace*. We may certainly give such persons all the honor and praise they deserve. We may wish that the world contained more of these peaceful characters. Yet we do not believe that the Savior refers to these. He does not bestow such an eulogium upon a mere constitutional peculiarity, nor place this character in the highest place of the blessed. Many of these persons cry Peace! peace! when there is no peace. For the sake of personal ease and comfort, they sacrifice truth, conscience and God. Instead of promoting real peace, they, in the end, introduce discord and war; for truth and principle alone constitute the truly reliable basis of peace.

Nor can we apply it to those zealous peace-*makers* who really make great efforts to promote and establish peace, but upon such truthless and godless foundations.

They may acquire great praise and influence among men, for their peaceful endeavors—they may be hailed as mediators; but will be condemned in the end. Paul says: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." There is a limit, even to the desire of peace; there is a time when it is *not possible*, if we desire to please God, to maintain peace. The Savior praises those men who love peace, and endeavor to preserve and promote it, for God's sake. They are peace-makers, not because they are created or born so, but because they are prompted to it by God's spirit. They have learned to look upon peace, as something highly pleasing to God, and necessary to the best interests of the individual and the community. They are sincere in their attachment to peace. They are ready and determined to preserve peace, as far as lieth in them. This is the very first thing needful to constitute this character.

The peace-maker must be willing to do to others, as he wishes them to do to him. He must scrupulously avoid every unfair action, word, and gesture. He must shun every step, that may be calculated to produce dissension. It will be necessary, not only to avoid acts, and words of offence, but the least *appearance* of evil.

He must be willing at times to sacrifice his own rights. He dare not yield, where God, and conscience, and the welfare of others, or any cause he has no right to sacrifice, command him to be steadfast. But, to be determined to have his own way at every risk, to sustain no loss, and never to yield, will never secure peace.

He must be willing and prompt to do and suffer, in order that harmony may be preserved. He must "follow peace with all men;" pursue it as a great good, and exert himself to promote it. He will not meddle in the affairs of other men, nor introduce himself as a mediator and pacificator, where his presence is not desired. But wherever and whenever it is possible, he will exert himself to make peace; to speak words of conciliation and kindness, and to bring opponents together. He will never be found upon the side of those, who, perfectly satisfied if they themselves enjoy peace, never care to give the same blessing to others; men so exceedingly selfish, that they would regard all contentions around them with perfect indifference, provided their own ease and peace are not disturbed. The peace-maker does not only make peace for himself, but for all around him, as far as he can.

All men can find exercise for a peaceful disposition. God has not created us to stand alone in the world, and to separate ourselves from our brethren of mankind, to serve him in life-long loneliness, in deserts and caves. He has made us social beings, and we all stand in connection with our fellow-men. We are linked together with others in the family, in the civil community, and in the church of God. In each of these spheres, the peace-maker finds a field for the cultivation and practice of a peaceful disposition.

How important is the cultivation of peace to a household! How happy the family, whose members are peace-makers! Not only will they studiously

avoid all wrong and injustice towards each other, but even every appearance of evil. They will study each other's comforts, and have respect and forbearance for each other's weaknesses. All will be found ready to make those little concessions upon which so much depends. The general peace and happiness will be deemed of greater importance than the gratification of personal and individual views and pleasure. How would the number of unhappy households, separations, and divorces decrease, if husbands and wives would study the character of the peace-maker! If brothers and sisters would cultivate this disposition, how much more frequently might we exclaim: "Behold, how good, how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." How blessed the family, which possesses a solitary peace-maker. One soft voice may turn away so much wrath! Such an one is like an angel from heaven in the midst of the household, at whose approach the evil spirits of discord and anger fly; like a golden chain, holding together those who might otherwise be torn asunder. Sometimes, a gentle wife is such a peace-maker, diffusing around her an irresistible atmosphere of peace and love. Sometimes this angelic office may be discharged by a little child, whose heavenly smile, and musical words, and gentle hand, serve to bind

together father and mother, brothers and sisters. Blessed is the peace-maker, who endeavors to promote and establish peace in the family!

But he will also promote peace as a subject or citizen. He will never be found among the turbulent and rebellious. He will never inflame the minds and hearts of his fellow-citizens, by words or deeds. If he sits in the highest place of the land, or among senators and representatives, he will study peace, speak for it, and endeavor to preserve and promote it. Should his position enable him to do so, he will stand between the nations of the earth, preventing war and misery. If he walks among the humble masses of his countrymen, he will raise his voice, and exert his influence for the same peaceful purposes. He believes that the welfare of the world, of his own country, state, city, town and village depends upon peace, and his talents are exerted to secure it.

> Oh, peace! thou source and soul of social life;
> Beneath whose calm inspiring influence,
> Science his views enlarges, art refines,
> And swelling commerce opens all her ports;
> Blest be the man divine, who gives us thee!

The Christian, however, also finds exercise for his peace-making disposition in the midst of the church of Christ, of which he is a member. He knows that it it his duty to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem," and his constant wish and prayer is: "peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces!" He says: "for my brethren and companion's sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee." If discord destroys the

happiness of the family, and the prosperity of the state, it cannot but prove destructive to the best interests of the Church. This has been established by the Prince of Peace; its mission is to proclaim peace to all mankind; its fundamental principles are peace and righteousness; the bonds which hold its parts together, are bonds of peace. Yet how often has the apple of discord been cast into the midst of Zion! Wo be unto those who distract the church, and destroy the sweet peace of Jerusalem! How excellent the labors of those godly men, who endeavor to unite the church, instead of dividing it more, who, with all truth and earnestness, are "endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace!" How frequently do the Apostles, in their Epistles, exhort their disciples to follow peace, which they describe as one of the loveliest and most blessed fruits of the spirit! The real Christian peace-maker, will do all he can in the church at large, and in that particular fold, in which God has placed him, to promote and establish peace. In every congregation occasions may and do arise, when a word of peace spoken in season, and in the proper spirit, may calm the troubled waters, as did the word of Christ upon the Sea of Galilee. Wo be unto those selfish, proud, and ambitious wranglers, who love their own opinions, and ways, more than the good of the church! Blessed are the peace-makers: they form the real cement, which holds together the living stones of the temple of God.

We have before remarked, that the peace-makers referred to by the Savior, are those who love peace,

and promote it from principle, and for God's sake. This disposition is a *gracious* one, the work and fruit of the Holy Spirit. We believe, that no one can be a real peace-maker, unless he has found peace himself. Man in his natural state, is at enmity with God. God hath reconciled the world to himself. Jesus came to proclaim peace, "and having made peace through the blood of his cross, and reconciled all things unto God." It is therefore needful above all things, that a man suffer himself to be reconciled to God. If he repents, and believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, he will find peace to his soul, peace in believing, that peace of God which passeth all understanding. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have *peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, *peace*," etc. "For he (Christ) is our *peace*, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of Commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." When a man is at peace with God, he will feel that peace within, which he never felt before; and only then will he become truly a lover and promoter of peace. It is his nature now to make peace, for war and conten-

tion are as uncongenial to him, as to the great God of Peace.

But, we believe, that if he desires to become a peace-maker in the highest sense of the word, he will not only labor to keep away discord, and to promote peace and harmony among men; but to lead them to seek and find that peace, which they need. He knows that peace, which is not founded in God, and flows not from the peace of God, is in reality no peace at all. He is sincerely desirous to spread the blessed influence of peace over the whole earth, and every individual heart. He himself has found peace in God, peace in believing; can he do better, in order to promote peace, than to lead men to God, to be reconciled to him, so that they two may have peace in their own hearts? The peace in a family, which floweth from the peace of God, is the only permanent peace. The peaceful influences pervading the civil community, which emanate from the Christianity of the individual citizens, will be the most beneficial to the community. That peace in the church, which is the result of the faith and love of its membership, is the real peace, pleasing to God, and calculated to build up the church.

Should not the peace-maker endeavor to establish the foundations, before he begins to raise the superstructure? Will it not be wise to lead men to the fountain of all peace, by endeavoring to lead them to God and the Lord Jesus Christ? By exhibiting in his daily walk and conversation, the great principles, the beauty and blessedness of the gospel of peace,

he will become a preacher of peace, and a real peace-maker.

Does this beatitude also stand in connection with those which have preceeded? Undoubtedly.

We may observe a connection with that which immediately precedes. We have learned, that those who desire to ascend the hill of the Lord, must have *pure hearts*, and also *clean hands*. Who hath cleaner hands than the peace-maker? He emphatically cleanses his hands of all wrong towards his fellow-men. He is not guilty of their blood; he does not stain himself with unrighteous gain; he walks before them in peace and righteousness. He must be sincere and pure before God, and a lover and promoter of peace before men; and the latter will become a proof and an evidence of the existence of the former.

If a man has received righteousness — if he has found mercy and peace in believing, he must bring forth fruits — the first fruit, which consists in being merciful to others, even as he has received, and still desires to receive mercy. He is required to become pure and single-hearted. Now, still more is required of him — he rises to the highest stage of the Christian life, when he becomes an active promoter, among others, of that peace which God loves and bestows. It is not only a negative, but a positive quality. It is not merely forgiveness, kindness, mercy towards others; but he becomes a messenger of peace, a herald of the cross, a minister of reconciliation, crying, by word and example, "Be ye reconciled to God!" Who shall not be willing to pronounce such persons

blessed? They are blessed in their own hearts. The blessed words have been spoken to their hearts: "Peace be with you!" They look up to God, not trembling with fear, but with the trust and love of children in their hearts, and the precious word Abba —Father, upon their lips. They are certainly blessed, for they live at peace with all the world. Men consider them blessed; and the worst infidel, and even the most violent of men, must praise them in their own hearts, for their peaceful walk, and their continued and self-denying efforts to promote peace. They command love and respect in the family — they are regarded as the safest and truest friends of the state; and in the church, they are loved as disciples of the Master.

Blessed are they indeed. But the Savior gives us a further reason for this blessedness; he adds a blessing and promise, which is entirely in keeping with the character described. He says: "*They shall be called the children of God!*"

In Paul's address to the Athenians, he tells them, that "certain also of their own poets have said, for we are also his (God's) offspring." We are all the offspring of God, and every human being may regard him as the true *Father* of all. He is our Creator, Preserver, and daily Benefactor; and in Him, we live and move, and have our being. All men have the same right to call God *Father*, "since all alike receive their lives, and every blessing from God." However, "in a specific sense, they only can truly call God their Father, who have not only received from him their out-

ward natural life, but are also the children of his Spirit, and are truly formed in his image." We are all his children by our natural birth; but we must be *born again*, by the Holy Ghost, before we can become children, in the higher, spiritual sense. We must receive "the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba—Father." "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God," when we are born again by that spirit. Paul says to the Galatians: "For ye are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus." "But as many as received him (Christ), to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man; but of God." "For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

The true Christian will therefore be a child of God. As such, he must be led by God's spirit, conform to God's will, and imitate, as far as he—the child of the dust, can, the perfections of God's character. The child must resemble the Father; and those who are most like him shall be best entitled to the name of children. Men are called the children of Abraham, for imitating his faith, although they may not be lineal descendants of Abraham. Christ said to the wicked Jews: "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do;" and his apostle, John, says: "He that committeth sin, is of the devil." Those, therefore, who resemble another person, good or evil, may be called his children.

Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be call-

ed the children of God! These bear the greatest resemblance to God.

How frequently is God called the "God of peace!" "Now the God of peace be with you all." "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly." "Live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you." "Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means."

When the multitude of the heavenly host praised God, at the time when the Savior was born, they sang: "Glory to God in the highest, *and on earth peace*, good will toward men." Jesus came into the world to remove the ancient enmity, and to establish peace upon the earth. Among the names given to him in prophecy seven hundred years before, this is not forgotten: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be npon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, *The Prince of Peace*,"—the last, but by no means least glorious of his names. He came to make peace between God and man; man and his fellow-man; and in a man's own heart. The gospel is a message of peace. "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" It is the gracious will of God, not only that the gospel of peace should be proclaimed, but that every man may find peace in believing. It is God's wish that all who hear the glad tidings of salvation, may be saved. It is the will of God, that all wars should cease through-

out the earth, and he cheers us by the promise, that such a time shall come. There is no war in heaven; there is an everlasting, undisturbed peace. If God's name is hallowed, and his kingdom comes, and his will is done upon the earth, then will God extend to the earth "peace, like a river, and the glory of God like a flowing stream." Every part of the revealed will of God proves that he is indeed a God of peace, and that he desires above all things to give peace on earth. For this purpose Jesus entered the flesh; endured the contradiction of sinners; took the chastisement of our peace "upon himself; and now sitteth at the right hand of glory, from whence he sent forth the spirit of peace, and all the messengers of peace with the gospel of peace. He looks down from his exalted throne, upon all the discords, contentions, and wars among the children of earth, and his merciful desire upon all is, that they may find that peace which the world cannot give.

Who among the children of men best deserves the title of child of God? Shall we not reply, he who is a co-laborer with God, who is led by the same spirit, and throughout his life endeavors to promote the great ends of God? And is not the peace-maker such a person? Humble as his position, and feeble as his strength may be, he enters into the merciful plans of his heavenly Father, he becomes like-minded to God, and sincerely and faithfully labors to preserve, to establish, and to promote peace on earth, so dear to God. Does he not prove himself God's true Son, —having the same spirit, engaged in the same work?

The gracious promise of the Savior to such is—they shall not only be, but *shall be called*, the children of God. When the Christian hungers and thirsts, and receives by faith, he finds peace in believing that he is a child of God. He is to be merciful, and this will be another proof, that he is a child of God. He is pure in heart, and the Spirit of God beareth witness with his own spirit, that he is a child of God. But now, he shall be *called* so! May we not say, *called* so by men? Men may reccognize it in his merciful disposition, and in the purity and integrity of his character. But they will recognize it better still, when he goeth about with an active desire to bestow the blessings of peace. The consistent peace-maker, such as we have attempted to portray him, will be recognized wherever he lives, moves, and has his being. Men know, from their own experience and observation, from the knowledge of their own hearts, that such a character is not the fruit of flesh and blood; they will recognize the finger and spirit of God; they will recognize these men as the friends and the children of God. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." Men judge of their fellow-men by their lives; and believe "by their fruits ye shall know them." They reason thus: "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good

fruit." They behold the sweet and lovely fruits of peace; they behold the unostentatious efforts to avoid all offence, and to establish peace with God and man; and they exclaim. "these are no hypocrites, these are the true children of God!" And, we would ask, can there be a nobler name, a higher distinction than this? Are all the titles and honors of this earth to be compared to this?

"Not all the nobles of the earth,
Who boast the honors of their birth,
Such real dignity can claim,
As those who bear the Christian name.

To them the privilege is given,
To be the sons and heirs of heaven;
Sons of the God who reigns on high,
And heirs of joy beyond the sky.

If I've the honor, Lord, to be
One of this num'rous family,
On me the gracious gift bestow,
To call Thee Abba, Father, too.

So may my conduct ever prove
My filial piety and love!
Whilst all my brethren clearly trace
Their Father's likeness on my face.

They shall, however, not merely be called the children of God by men. Their praise is not of men, but of God. "For not he that commendeth himself," or is commended by men alone, "is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." They *shall be called* the children of God, by God himself; he shall acknowledge them

as his here, and in the world to come. Now already he granteth to such the spirit of adoption, which enables them to address him as Abba, Father. He shall own them as his children, by manifold favors, by protection in the hour of danger and temptation, and by a final deliverance from all evil.

But "if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and *heirs* according to the promise." "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a Son; and if a Son, then an heir of God through Christ." "That, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

Well may the Apostle John exclaim: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God." It is indeed an exhibition of the highest love, to make children of God, of the poor children of earth. Now already shall we be called by this honorable name. But we shall be called so, when the world shall appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. God will then own the peace-makers as his peculiar and beloved children, in the presence of men and angels, and bid them enter into that peaceful rest, which remaineth for the people of God. Christ is God's only-begotten Son in a peculiar sense, one with the Father from eternity. The peace-makers shall be the adopted sons, through Christ, and shall be regarded as his brethren, and, as joint heirs with him, inherit eternal life and

glory. Higher dignity and honor cannot be bestowed upon any creature, than thus to be called a child of the Almighty and Holy Creator. All the honors bestowed upon the earth, cannot be compared with this. It is the announcement of the most glorious of rewards, to be bestowed upon those only, who imitate God, in loving, establishing, and promoting upon the earth, the kingdom of peace. To see God seems the highest degree of honor and happiness. But the true Christian shall not only *see* God, as a servant, at a distance, but he shall see him as a child, he shall dwell with Him as His Father, in those blessed mansions, which the first-born of the Father has prepared for all that love the kingdom of peace, and bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

If a man has reached this step, he has attained the highest rank among the professed followers of the Lord. His faith is active in love; he has become a faithful fellow-laborer with God himself, in spreading peace among men. To him the highest promise and reward is given. On this account, this beatitude may be regarded as the completion of this beautiful and comprehensive description of the children of the kingdom, the eighth beatitude having a reference to all that precede; and pronouncing a blessing upon those who faithfully continue to hold fast that which they have before attained. Many, therefore, count but *seven* beatitudes, and seem to discover in this, a reference to the sacred number seven.

May God grant us grace to become peace-makers. May we walk as the children of light; and may our

conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ, which is a gospel of peace. Every Christian should be a light of the world, and salt of the earth. He should not only enjoy the peace of God in his own heart, but should suffer it to diffuse a fragrance around him. What nobler work can we perform in this world, than to walk about as the children of God—in the world, but not of the world; our conversation being in heaven, whose peaceful atmosphere we bear with, and spread around us? Blessed—happy in time and eternity, are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God!

Bless'd are the men of peaceful life,
Who quench the coals of growing strife:
They shall be called the heirs of bliss,
The sons of God—the God of Peace.

Let others boast their ancient line,
  In long succession great;
In the proud list let heroes shine,
  And monarchs swell the state;
Descended from the King of kings,
Each saint a nobler title sings.

Pronounce me, gracious God, thy son—
  Own me an heir divine;
I'll pity princes on the throne,
  When I can call thee mine;
Sceptres and thrones unenvy'd rise,
And lose their lustre in my eyes.

Content, obscure, I pass my days,
  To all I meet unknown;
And wait till thou thy child shalt raise,
  And seat me near thy throne;
No name, no honor here I crave,
Well-pleas'd with those beyond the grave.

Jesus, my elder brother, lives;
  With him, I too shall reign:
No hostile pow'r, while he survives,
  Shall make the promise vain;
In him my title stands secure,
And shall, while endless years endure.

When he, in robes divinely bright,
  Shall once again appear,
Thou too, my soul, shalt shine in light,
  And his full image bear.
Enough! I wait th' appointed day;
Blest Savior! haste and come away.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Persecuted.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets, which were before you."—Matth., v. 10–12.

Blessed are those who cease to do evil, and learn to do well. Blessed are those, who, led by the Spirit of God, have found the way of repentance and faith. Blessed are those who have found righteousness, purity of heart, and that peace, which has made them peacemakers. They have obtained the one thing needful—they have chosen the good part; yes, the very best possession which man can obtain. It is well to begin the Christian race, and to enter into the Christian conflict, clothed in the whole armor of God. But it is better still, to continue in that race, until the goal and crown of victory are reached—to battle manfully in the warfare, until every foe is overcome, and the righteous Judge himself shall place upon the victor's brow, the everlasting crown of righteousness. It is of the utmost, of vital importance, for all those already

pronounced blessed, to hold fast that which they have, and to continue faithful unto the end; then alone shall they obtain the crown—then alone shall they see God, and be called his children, when God shall send some to the right, but others to the left. When the Savior pronounced these blessings upon these different classes of men — or these dispositions and characteristics in the individual Christian, he of course included this — that they should continue faithful unto the end. But now he adds another beatitude, which seems partly to stand by itself, and is nevertheless intimately connected, not only with one, but with all that precede it. Upon this everything depends. If a man possesses all the dispositions hitherto described, and fails here, he will lose his reward — his glorious crown. Blessed are all those, who continue faithful — who hold fast their confidence in Him to the end, amidst all the difficulties and persecutions they may encounter in the world.

But while we may regard it as a closing exhortation and admonition, assuring the blessing to the faithful alone, we may also find in it a word of great encouragement. As if the Savior would say, I have pronounced these Blessed, in time and eternity. But, you object that notwithstanding all this, they encounter numerous difficulties in the world; that they are even persecuted, reviled, and slandered, by wicked and blasphemous men; how then can such be blessed? If I have spoken in paradoxes hitherto, let me add another, and perhaps the strangest, yet undoubtedly the greatest of all; let the world revile and persecute, I say unto all

these, Blessed are ye nevertheless; fear not, despond not; though the world may sneer at the idea of the blessedness of such persons, ye *are* blessed, here in time, and there in Heaven! Though these words appear to be directed particularly to the chosen Apostles, they are nevertheless intended for all the followers of Jesus through all ages. They endured persecutions, and by their faithfulness, proved themselves worthy successors of the glorious army of prophets, who had preceded them. The Savior, in one of the verses before us, changes the indefinite form of remark, and addresses those before him, by saying. Blessed are *ye!* But we all have a right to consider ourselves included.

It has been remarked frequently, that the blessed Redeemer did not for a moment attempt to deceive his Apostles by promises and expectations, which could never be realized. The Jews expected a temporal sovereign, a Messiah who should ascend the throne of his father David, and signalize the very beginning of his reign, by casting off the grievous yoke of Rome. His disciples too appeared to have low and carnal ideas of the kingdom he had come to establish. Two of them, with their mother, thought of high places in connection with his government. But the Savior never encouraged such expectations. There was nothing to warrant them, either in his personal appearance, his language, or his actions. His kingdom was not to be accompanied with regal pomp and splendor; but was to be within the *hearts* of men, a spiritual kingdom, which should subject the world,

by its influence upon the heart, mind, and life of individuals. His kingdom was one of light, truth, peace, and righteousness. No earthly emoluments or offices were to be expected by those, who became his followers. They should not even be permitted to live a life of peace and happiness, but were required to make great sacrifices. He demanded of every one, that he should first of all deny himself; secondly, take his cross upon him; and then to follow Him. He held himself before them as an example, of what they might expect in this world. If the world had treated the master and king in such a manner, would they not be apt to treat his servants, subjects and followers in the same way? These things were presented to their eyes at the outset of his public ministry, and every individual in that little band had his future prospects clearly marked out to him;—if he indulged in bright anticipations of earthly ease and glory, it was not the faithful Master's fault.

And what was this Master's experience? "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not." This was emphatically true! "And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." Here is a great fact stated, and at the same time a reason given, why this is so. And this is a reason which did not arise then, but existed long before, and exists to

this day. Men loved—and still love—darkness rather than light, *because their deeds are evil*. Nor is it merely a matter of preference, that they *love* darkness *more* than light; it is a positive love for the one, and *hatred* towards the other. Christ called himself the light of the world. He came to bring light into the moral and religious world, and to scatter the heavy clouds of darkness, that rested upon the minds and hearts of men. He came to expose the deep errors and vices of men, to point out to them their depravity and danger, and to lead them back to God, as unto a reconciled Father. But his contemporaries, at least the majority of them, shrunk back from the light; they would not come to it, for their deeds were evil, and they did not wish to have them reproved, or, as the margin reads—*discovered!*

Christ came as the promised Prince of Peace. He desired to make peace between God and man, and between men. Yet, he knew how the evil elements of the world would oppose the progress of Gospel truth. He knew how this truth would agitate the family, the state, and religion. He knew that men loved darkness and hated light, and that, should light be introduced, which would expose their wickedness, they would cry out against the light, and make every effort to put it out. Therefore, though his great object, and his final work, would be to make "Peace on Earth," as the angels sung near Bethlehem, he also knew that the immediate effect would be war; the war of darkness against light, of hell against heaven. On this account he spoke those memorable words in Matth. 10:

34, etc; "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's own foes shall be they of his own household." This opposition of darkness to gospel light and truth, shall show itself against the *bearers* thereof; men shall rise up against him that teaches and lives in a manner which is a continued reproach to their own wickedness. This showed itself in the life of the Redeemer. The wicked rose against him, and persecuted him, until they nailed him to the cross. The same reception was given to his apostles. He told them in advance, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves:" "but beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in the synagogues; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake."

Has the world changed since the Savior's time? Has the opposition of darkness and wickedness ceased? Facts prove the contrary. The church of God and the world still continue two different systems. The church is aggressive in all her aims; the world resists, and desires to overthrow this terrible power. The world does not and cannot fight against an abstraction; she therefore opposes the living messengers of truth. Men still love darkness rather than light, for the carnal mind is enmity against God. How important, therefore, that the sons of righteousness, and the children of God should remain steadfast, and faithfully continue to proclaim the truth to the world!

There seems to be a connection, especially between the seventh beatitude and the present. Blessed are the peace-makers; even some of the children of men will call them God's children, and will praise them for disinterested endeavors to spread the gospel of peace. But in this pursuit, especially when they shall live as peace-makers, they shall encounter the opposition of the wicked, who hate this gospel of peace, and every one who intrudes it into their notice. The very life of such peace-makers is a reproach to all the rapine of the children of the devil. Though they utter no harsh words, and perform no injurious acts, their gentle Christian lives offend — their pure and truthful principles eloquently condemn the hollow and ungodly maxims of the world. Then, the world will rise up in arms against them. Blessed, then, are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

But let us studiously guard against all error, in reference to the *persons* upon whom the Savior pronounces this beatitude.

Many imagine themselves to belong to the number of the *persecuted*, blessed by the Redeemer—forgetting that he restricts his blessing to those who are persecuted for *righteousness*' sake. St. Peter well remarks: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye: for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busy-body in other men's matters. Yet, if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let

him glorify God on this behalf." We may provoke persecution, by our own conduct. We may propose principles, subversive of all truth and happiness. If such are persecuted, they dare not number themselves among those to whom this beatitude is given. Men may demean themselves in an unlawful manner, and bring upon themselves the righteous indignation of the people and the magistrate. Surely, such cannot flatter themselves with this blessing! Men may provoke persecution, "by violating the laws of civil society, or by modes of speech that are unnecessarily offensive to others." How many have flattered themselves, and still continue to flatter themselves that they are real martyrs in the sight of God, and have a full right to appropriate to themselves the promises of the Savior, when they have really no claim to them whatever. They act in bold defiance of the fundamental principles of morality and righteousness; and, when indignation is roused against them, and they are made to feel that Justice does not bear the sword in vain, they cry aloud, that they are reviled—slandered, and persecuted for righteousness' sake. They glory in their manifold tribulations, and are so much deceived, that they regard such persecutions and sufferings as a certain proof and evidence that they are right.

But the Savior refers to suffering for the sake of *righteousness.* We have already spoken of this. When the Savior, in verse 11, speaks of suffering thus, "for *my sake,*" we cannot doubt, concerning his meaning. He refers to the *righteous*, the *merciful*, the *pure in heart*, the *peace-makers*, the *children of God.* He

speaks of his followers — of Christians — of those who shall be, and are persecuted, because they love God, aud the Lord Jesus Christ, and preach the Gospel by their daily walk and conversation. They are suffering for the truth's sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, and not for their own misdeeds, and the transgression of human laws. They do not *seek*, or provoke this; but it falls upon them on account of their principles, and because the world hates them, and their reproving lives, just as it hated the simple, truthful, and sin-reproving Jesus of Nazareth. We include in this, all men who are persecuted for conscience' sake — who would rather serve and obey God, than a wicked world. Christians have been sometimes persecuted by their fellow-Christians, because they would not see as they saw, and believe precisely what they believed. How many have thus been persecuted, since the dawn of the Reformation, by those who profess to be Christians! With Whitby, we therefore include those who are persecuted, "because they do not own that as an article of faith, or any part of the Christian duty, which God hath not declared to be so: for seeing this cannot be done without making profession of a lie, or saying we believe what we can see no reason to believe; to suffer for this cause, is evidently to suffer because we will not play the hypocrite, or give the lie to our own consciences; and therefore, this, in St. Peter's language, is to suffer "for conscience toward God," and to suffer wrongfully or unjustly. Yea, seeing this cannot be done, but we must own another teacher, law-giver, and author of our faith, besides the Lord

Christ, — our sufferings for refusing to do this, are truly sufferings "for the sake of Christ," and such as make us happy sufferers, &c. Every Christian, therefore, who is persecuted on account of his devotion to Christ, and the word of God, is persecuted for righteousness' sake, and may apply this to himself.

The Savior also intimates the *manner*, in which his followers are persecuted.

In the 10th verse he makes use of the general expression "persecute," which includes every thing; but afterwards he refers to some of the particular forms, in which this comes upon his friends. To persecute is "to afflict, harass, or destroy, for adherence to a particular creed, or system of religious principles, or to a mode of worship," or in a more general sense, the word means, "to pursue in a manner to injure, vex, or afflict; to harass with unjust punishment or penalties for supposed offences; to inflict pain from hatred or malignity," (Webster.)

The first form of persecution, to which Christ refers, is that by *words*. "Blessed are ye, when men shall *revile* you." He had experienced this in his own person. Men had spoken contemptuously of him, his words, and works. They reviled him even when he was hanging upon the cross, in the bitter agony of an excruciating death. So was it with the disciples and apostles. When they went forth to proclaim the gospel of peace, men used offensive language towards them. In this way did the opposition of a malignant world first exhibit itself. The Jews especially spake

evil of that way, and reviled the Master and his faithful servants.

But their mouths were not satisfied with reviling, with bitter and angry words;—they said "all manner of evil against" Christ and his Apostles. Every reader of the New Testament is familiar with the slanderous accusations which the obstinate Jews heaped upon the spotless and merciful Savior, who went about through their cities and villages, doing good, healing their sick, and speaking words of kindness and comfort. They accused him of gluttony and drunkenness; they denounced him as a destroyer of the law and the prophets; they slandered him as the boon companion of publicans and sinners: they affected to believe, and wished to induce others to believe, that he performed his astounding miracles through the agency of Beelzebub, the prince of devils; they accused him of blasphemy and many other things. Yet he walked in their midst, without sin, and no man could truthfully accuse him of the least transgression against any law of God or the state. They said all manner of evil against him, but *falsely:* there was not a word of truth in it.

Did not the Apostles experience the same slanderous accusations? Read the Acts and Epistles, and you will find, that persecution in this form was familiar to them. Paul had experienced slander; men made him utter abominable errors, ("as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say) Let us do evil, that good may come?"

Who has not heard of the shameful slanders heaped

upon the early Christians, who were accused of all unrighteousness and licentiousness? Terrible things were reported of their assemblies, and the heathen multitude were inflamed against them, as the very dregs of society. They were slandered before governors and kings, and these evil reports frequently brought among them crushing persecutions. Yet — thanks be to God!—it was *false*—all these accusations were *lies*, brought against the Sons of God by the Devil and his wicked emissaries. They were able to live these slanders down, and prove to the world that, Christianity loved the light, because all its deeds were true and pure.

But persecution did not end with evil speaking, and slanderous accusations. Christ was persecuted unto death, and his enemies were not satisfied until he breathed his last upon the cross. They were not even satisfied then, but carried their malignant opposition to the very grave in which he was laid.

And did not persecution for righteousness' sake follow the apostles, until they too breathed their last? And how numerous were the privations, and afflictions, which they endured from the moment of their first public appearance in behalf of Jesus, to that last moment, when they breathed out their souls to Him? Listen to the experience of one of them. "In stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in death oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in

perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." These were the sufferings of Paul; and, although many of them were caused by the nature of the work in which he was engaged, many of them were the result of persecution for righteousness' sake. And what was the end of all? Chains, and at last death, in Rome. And what became of the others? We are told, that all suffered in their bodies, and that all at last found a martyr's death, with the exception of the beloved disciple John, who, although persecuted, like all the rest, is said to have died a natural death.

The history of God's Church records the terrible persecutions endured by the primitive Christians. They suffered in reputation, worldly possessions, friends, and their own lives. They were hunted like dogs from place to place, and at last brought to die, under the feet of wild beasts, or by each other's hands, in the arena, for the amusement of a blood-thirsty populace. How many thousands perished in the violent persecutions excited against Christians, by the cruel emperors of Rome! The dust of martyrs mingled with the earth of every land over which the Roman eagle spread his wings; and their blood, like Abel's, cried from the mountains and the valleys to God, their Father and avenger.

How many have been persecuted for righteousness'

sake, even unto death, since that time! Let the valleys of some parts of the old world tell their tale of cruelty and blood! Let the halls and dungeons of the Inquisition speak!

But, it may be remarked, these terrible days of blood have passed away, and the Christian is no longer persecuted thus, for righteousness' sake. Is this really so? If it were so, then might we have reason to fear that the true faith and its true professors had departed from the earth.

Christ said: "Remember the word that I said unto you: The servant is not above his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." The same opposition of darkness to light still exists; yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution. It is true, that in our day and land we shall not suffer in our bodies — in life, property, or liberty, for proving faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ. But there *are* lands where men must still suffer in their dearest interests and rights, for faithful obedience to the Gospel and to conscience.

Yet we are all exposed to that species of persecution which emanates from the lips of the wicked. Men may speak evil, revile, and insult us. Our faith and constancy may be tried in a thousand ways, which, though they appear petty at first sight, are calculated to injure us in our own feelings, in our standing among others, and in the midst of our households. And it is too often the case, that these little persecutions of ridicule and slander afflict men more than open assaults. There is more satisfaction in meeting an open

attack, than being exposed to the inflictions of a secret foe. If we are made to suffer by the ungodly, for conscience' sake, in any manner or form, we are persecuted for *his name's sake.*

Christ, let us ever remember, did not *court* persecution. There were times when he avoided his enemies, though they were anxious to give him the martyr's crown. When his hour had fully come, he yielded himself into their hands. You never find him exciting persecution—he was peaceable and kind; but when it came upon him, he bore it, as He alone could! The Christian is not merely not to *deserve* chastisement—he is not to court, or seek persecution, in order to gain a martyr's praise. The Savior enjoined a different practice upon the minds of his apostles. "But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come." They should not court, but rather avoid persecution. But when duty to God demanded it—when principle and conscience were concerned—when it would have compromised the Gospel, and truth, had they fled; they manfully and resignedly bore the persecution which the wicked hurled upon them. It is well known, that many of the early Christians were so enraptured with the noble fate of many faithful martyrs around them—whose praise was in all the churches, that they became so eager to be martyrs themselves, as to seek persecution, that it might crush them also, and thus gain for them a crown of glory.

But this was weakness, and want of true knowledge:

for they had not learned this anxiety for martyrdom in the school of Christ.

So, should we never seek it for ourselves; but when it comes, let us receive it in the strength of the Lord God Almighty, and if He is for us, who can be against us? "This know also, that in the last days, perilous times shall come, for men shall be *false-accusers, fierce despisers of those that are good.* Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth; men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." The atheist, infidel, sceptic, and godless man, will frequently say and do many things, that are nothing less than a petty, contemptible, but seriously annoying of the Christian, for Christ's name's sake. And such persecution falls, not only upon the ministers of the Gospel, but upon the laity — old and young, male and female, high and lowly.

The Christian can avoid these things, by hiding and sinking his Christianity. The less he exhibits of this, the better for himself. And when there is very little outcry on the part of Satan and his thousands of loyal servants, we may either think that there is little religion to annoy them, or that its aggressive influences are concealed. Utter the truth fully and boldly, and the foes of the Gospel will start up on every side, and denounce you as a bigot, and a traitor to the light and liberty of the age. Let the Christian community consistently and energetically engage in a godly work of reform, and the evil spirits of darkness will start forth

from every corner and crevice, like the owls and bats of night. It is as true to-day, as it was eighteen hundred years ago, "that they that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." Daily observation and experience prove the fact. And many a private Christian has painfully experienced the truthfulness of the Savior's prediction, by finding the greatest foe to his Master and to himself, as his disciple, among the members of his own household.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* The Savior, in pronouncing this, in the last of the beatitudes, comes back to that with which he began. The beginning and the end are the same. And in this, everything else is included. How graciously and invitingly he opens this blessed discourse! Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven! They are the proper persons to be introduced into it, and if they retain this disposition, they shall at last possess it fully. He then proceeds to describe, not only the different features of the same individual, but also the different features and blessed privileges of this kingdom of heaven. It gives *comfort*, the *possession of earth*, a sufficiency of the true *food* and *drink* of the soul, *mercy*, the *beatific vision*, and makes men *children* and *heirs* of God. Those who are faithful to the end, amidst all persecutions, difficulties and sacrifices — what shall they obtain? what *can* they obtain, but that which was promised in the beginning, and in a different form in every successive sentence — the kingdom of heaven? Blessed are God's faithful wit-

nesses in an ungodly world: for theirs is, and ever shall be, the kingdom of heaven.

But the Savior adds more to this promise. He does not only pronounce the persecuted happy, but calls upon them to *rejoice!* The paradox becomes stronger every moment. It is strange enough to prononnce the persecuted—the oppressed, *blessed;* but to call upon such to *rejoice* amidst all this, is certainly unnatural! Yet he is not even satisfied with this; he adds, "*and be exceeding glad!*" This latter term signifies the highest expression of delight.

It is hardly necessary to say, that Christ expects all his followers to bear the cross with patience and resignation. He that is not willing nor able to do this, is not worthy of the kingdom of heaven. When he is called upon to enter the service of Christ, he is told that he must take up the cross, and a yoke and burden. He must be willing, without murmuring or repining, to bear the sufferings and privations he may be called upon to suffer, in the service of his Master. Blessed are all those who endure patiently all persecutions for Christ's sake.

However, the Redeemer desires more than this—in every respect, he loveth a *cheerful* giver. He does not think that his martyrs should merely bear, and sigh with patience and resignation; he desires them to find light in the midst of this darkness—life in death—songs of gladness in the hour of affliction, and sweetness in the bitter cup. Instead of being dismayed, or merely resigned,—*Rejoice*, and be exceeding glad, O ye that are persecuted for my name's sake!

To the natural man, this seems as unnatural as to go to the poor man, sitting amidst the smoking ruins of his humble dwelling—his *all* upon the earth—with the words: Rejoice, and be exceeding glad! Or, as if one would go to the open grave, into which a widow is depositing her only son—and shout in her ear, Rejoice! Or, as if you would shout these words into the ears of a man dying amidst the flames!

Unnatural as such an exhortation may seem to you, thousands and ten thousands, in precisely such forlorn moments, have responded to the call, and have rejoiced, and exhibited exceeding great delight! Driven forth into exile—fathers and mothers, surrounded by a group of children, have rejoiced. Men and women could behold their dearest relatives die a martyr's death, and yet rejoice! The old and young, standing upon the burning pile—while the flames were licking around them, and the black smoke was stifling their voices, were heard rejoicing, and singing Psalms of victory, in the last moments! How were they able to feel and act thus? The words of the Savior, in this closing beatitude, give the answer. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad! Why? *For great is your reward in heaven!* Well may the poor man rejoice amidst ruins, if he feels assured that a nobler mansion will arise from them! Well may the exiled ones sing aloud, if they are sure of entering a Canaan flowing with milk and honey! Well might the dying martyr rejoice, for every licking flame pointed to heaven: and but a few moments more, and he would be at rest. The first martyr—Stephen, looked into that open heaven, and

commended his departing soul to Him who was ready to receive it. Many of those who were permitted to tread in his bloody footsteps, believed that they saw the same heaven opened. Men were indeed driving them out of the earth, but into the very arms of God. They were passing from the land of weary pilgrimage, to their eternal home. Shall not the pilgrim sing and shout for joy, when he beholds his native hills? Shall not the storm-tossed mariner rejoice, when he beholds the coast of his home, along the distant horizon? And shall not the dying martyr rejoice, as he gazes upon the golden gates of the New Jerusalem—thrown open to receive him, and hears the angelic bands welcoming another faithful bearer of the cross!

But he does not merely rejoice, because *heaven* and *home* are before him; he expects a reward, and a great reward. Let us not misunderstand the sacred Scripture, and our blessed Redeemer. Heaven and its joys is not given to the faithful one, as well-earned wages for his labor. He cannot look forward to this, as something due to him; for if it is of grace, it cannot be of works. By reward, we mean "that free and unmerited recompense which shall be given to the godly, by the goodness, bounty, and mercy of God, after all their labors in his service. This is a reward wholly of grace." This they look forward to. It is not merely a reward, but, according to Christ, a *great* reward! God will remember their faithfulness, and will graciously reward them for each act of self-denial, faithfulness, and suffering for his sake. Upon the earth, they drank the bitter cup, with their Master;

now, they shall drink the cup of joy forever. On the earth, they wore the crown of thorns, dyed in their own blood; there shall they wear the crown, and white garments. Here the rod of persecution was their lot; there they shall bear palms of victory. Great indeed is their reward in heaven. It is certain — beyond the reach of moth, rust, and thieves. They can bear to lose the world. They can rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for they are laying up treasures for heaven. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen, are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal." They can rejoice in the hour of death: for they "know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Paul says, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Therefore, James says, "My brethren, count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations." "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." "Behold, we count them happy, which endure." St. Peter says, "Beloved, think it not strange, concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but *rejoice*, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings:

that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye: for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part, he is evil spoken of; but on your part, he is glorified.—Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him, in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator." And let us look into the Book of Revelations, and what shall we find there? "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Great is the reward of every one, who endures the contradiction of sinners, and remains faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who have confessed him before a perverse and wicked world and generation, shall be owned and rewarded in heaven. May we all prove faithful to the end, that we may obtain this great reward — the crown of life — that "inheritance

incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away," reserved in heaven.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, says Christ; not only because great is your reward in heaven, but also for another reason: "*for so persecuted they the prophets, which were before you.*"

This was addressed to the apostles, but also to all disciples. Did the Jews thus persecute the prophets in former days? Read the Old Testament, and trace the lives of all these servants of God, and preachers of truth! Turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews, Chap. 11, and you will find what treatment these had received, at the hands of God's so highly favored people. They "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy;) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise."

Why does the Savior refer to this? It is easily understood. As if he would say, Nothing unusual is happening to you; all the faithful witnesses of God, from the beginning, have been treated in this manner.

But, in addition to this, rejoice, you are in excellent company! Regard it as one of the evidences that you are the children of God, when you find yourselves opposed by a wicked world, and treading in the

footsteps of the martyred prophets. You could not have nobler companions; humble though you be, you are by faithfulness in the Lord's service, enrolled among that glorious army, who for ages have fought a mighty crusade against the enemies of God. You are surrounded by a noble cloud of witnesses, who urge you by their example, and their present looking on, to run with patience, the race that is set before you, no matter how much the world, and the prince of this world, may oppose you. There is something exceedingly encouraging and invigorating in the thought that we share difficulties and trials with others. The noble army is willing to bear everything, when their leader is bearing with them. Thousands are found willing to enter, where others have found death, but also the crown of immortality, before them. How many rejoice to have themselves enrolled among the patriots of past ages, and to have their names handed down to posterity, in this connection! How exciting to many, to tread in the footsteps of the mighty men of former ages!

Rejoice, be glad: your names shall be placed by the side of those of prophets, and a prophet's reward shall be yours. How glorious the honor, to stand in the same line with all God's saints, from Abel to John the Evangelist! If persecution comes upon you, be not dismayed, but remember that the same happened to the prophets; and feel proud, because your suffering for the same cause, links your name and future with theirs.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad! there is still

another reason, which is not mentioned here, but which we cannot omit. Will it not be the real disciple's highest joy and glory, to be thought worthy of suffering for his Master's sake? We find that the Apostles looked upon it in this light. The Apostles, at the beginning of their public mininistry, after persecution, "departed from the presence of the councils, *rejoicing* that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." They regarded it as a high favor, to be permitted thus to testify their attachment to Him, before men. They had received so much, that they were anxious to show how much they appreciated it; and they were glad, not only to offer their words and services in acknowledgment; but still more so, when they were obliged to suffer. They suffered cheerfully, and rejoiced, that they could show their devotion to Christ, by pouring out their blood for his sake.

Shall we not, beloved readers, take these things to heart, and endeavor to give this evidence of our faithfulness to Christ? Though we may never encounter such bitter and terrible persecutions, we have opposition, against which we must contend. If we are overcome by these small trials, by these dwarfish enemies, how shall we be able to stand in the day of judgment? If Sodom and Gomorrha—the cities of the plain, shall rise up in accusation against the unbelieving cities of the Savior's day—Paul, Peter, and John, and tens of thousands of those who endured terrible persecutions faithfully, shall rise up against us, who dropped our arms at the first blast of the trumpet, and turned and fled, upon the first charge of the foe. Blessed are the faithful—yea, the faithful unto death!

If ye are persecuted, consider it a blessing, and not a curse. God places you in such a furnace that you may come forth, like gold purified in the fire. Consider it a blessing, because you have so excellent an opportunity! Consider it a blessing, that you are permitted to tread in the footsteps of martyrs. Consider it a blessing, and rejoice, that you are permitted to suffer a little, — Ah, how little! for that merciful Savior, who suffered so much for you. Consider it a blessing, for, if you are faithful, great is your reward in heaven.

Remember this too: "He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth, because of the word, by and by, he is offended." "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations, for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another." God grant that no trials, opposition, and persecution may be able to separate us from Christ. If we trust in him, we shall be able to bear all, and if we fall, we shall rise again; and if we fall for the last time on earth, we shall rise forever in heaven. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors, through

him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!"

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven!

Bless'd are the suff'rers who partake
Of pain and shame, for Jesus' sake:
Their souls shall triumph in the Lord—
Glory and joy are their reward.

Who are these in bright array?
  This innumerable throng,
Round the altar, night and day,
  Tuning their triumphant song?
"Worthy is the Lamb, once slain—
  Blessing, honor, glory, pow'r,
Wisdom, riches to obtain;
  New dominion ev'ry hour."

These through fiery trials trod—
  These from great affliction came;
Now before the throne of God,
  Seal'd with his eternal name—
Clad in raiment pure and white;
  Victor-palms in every hand—
Through their great Redeemer's might,
  More than conquerors they stand.

Hunger, thirst, disease unknown,
  On immortal fruits they feed;
Them the Lamb, amidst the throne,
  Shall to living fountains lead.

May 26 1858

Joy and gladness banish sighs—
  Perfect love dispels their fears;
And, forever from their eyes,
  God shall wipe away their tears.

CONCLUSION.

Who are the blessed?

Listen to the Redeemer's answer:—

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets, which were before you." Amen.

THE END.

Rev. Mr. Harbaugh's Popular Works.

LINDSAY & BLAKISTON, PHILADELPHIA,

Publish the following Series of Books, which have received the approbation of all Religious Denominations:

HEAVEN,

OR, AN EARNEST AND SCRIPTURAL INQUIRY INTO THE ABODE OF THE SAINTED DEAD.

BY THE REV. H. HARBAUGH.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST GERMAN REFORMED CHURCH, LANCASTER, PA.

In One Volume, 12mo. Price 75 Cents.

THE HEAVENLY RECOGNITION,

OR AN EARNEST AND SCRIPTURAL DISCUSSION OF THE QUESTION,

Will we Know our Friends in Heaven?

BY REV. H. HARBAUGH.

In One Volume, 12mo. Price 75 Cents.

THE HEAVENLY HOME;

OR,

THE EMPLOYMENT AND ENJOYMENTS OF THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN.

BY THE REV. H. HARBAUGH,

AUTHOR OF "THE HEAVENLY RECOGNITION OF FRIENDS," AND "HEAVEN; OR, THE SAINTED DEAD."

In One Volume, 12mo. Price $1 00.

HARBAUGH'S FUTURE LIFE;

CONTAINING

HEAVEN, OR, THE SAINTED DEAD,
THE HEAVENLY RECOGNITION,
THE HEAVENLY HOME.

THREE VOLUMES, NEATLY BOUND IN CLOTH, WITH GILT BACKS, AND A PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR. PRICE $2 50.

☞ Copies of the above Books, handsomely bound for presentation, in cloth, full gilt. Price of the first and second volumes, $1 25 each; of the third $1 50.

THE SEPULCHRES OF OUR DEPARTED.

BY THE REV. F. R. ANSPACH, A.M.

"As flowers which night, when day is o'er, perfume,
Breathes the sweet memory from a good man's tomb."
Sir E. L. Bulwer.

Third Edition. In one Vol., 12mo. Price $1. Cloth, gilt. $1 50.

This is a volume to comfort and to cheer; to render the grave familiar, and to derive from its contemplation the most encouraging hopes. A fine tone pervades the volume, and it abounds in just sentiments ornately expressed. We should be glad to see that general seriousness of feeling which would make such a volume popular.—*Presbyterian.*

All Christians who are looking forward to the bliss of heaven, by passing through the tomb, will be strengthened and comforted by glancing over the lessons here inculcated as addressed to the pilgrim in search of that better country.—*Christian Chronicle.*

THE CHILDREN OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

A Beautiful Presentation Volume. By the REV. THEOPHILUS STORK, D. D., Pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Philadelphia.

12mo., Cloth, 75 Cents; in full gilt, $1 00.

"How oft, heart-sick and sore,
I've wished I were once more
A little child."—*Mrs. Southey.*

The general contents, the devotional and lovely spirit that pervades it, the flowing, lucid, and rich diction, the sound sentiments, the encouragements to parents to bring up their children in the fear of the Lord, the abounding consolations for those who in God's providence have been called to yield up their little ones to Him who gave them, these and other characteristics, render this book one of the most interesting and valuable of the kind that has for a long time been presented to the public.—*Lutheran Observer.*

STRUGGLES FOR LIFE, An Autobiography.

In One Vol., 12mo. Price $1 00.

What Sunny and Shady Side are, as descriptive of American Pastoral Life, this delightful volume is as descriptive of the Life of an English pastor. It describes, in a most felicitous style, his labours, trials, sorrows, pleasures, and joys. But, perhaps, its chief value consists in the vivid views it gives of human nature as illustrated in the leading characteristics of English society, manners, and customs. —*Spectator.*

THE POETICAL WORKS OF JAMES MONTGOMERY.

The only complete edition; collected and prepared by him just prior to his death. With a PORTRAIT. One Volume, octavo.

Price, in Library style, $2 00; Cloth, full gilt, $3 00; Turkey Morocco, $4 00

The poetry of the Sheffield bard has an established reputation among serious readers of every class. The spirit of the humble Christian and the pure Philanthropist, breathes through it all; and few will rise from the perusal of Mr. Montgomery's poems without feeling the elevating power of his chaste and beautiful lines. We are glad to see such a favourite poet in such graceful attire. The type, paper, and entire "getting up" of this volume, is in tasteful accordance with the precious gems it contains, and reflects great credit on the publishers.—*Recorder.*

AN ILLUSTRATED LIFE OF MARTIN LUTHER,

THE GREAT GERMAN REFORMER. With a Sketch of the Reformation in Germany. Edited, with an Introduction, by the REV. THEOPHILUS STORK, D.D., late Pastor of St. Mark's Luthern Church, Philadelphia. Beautifully ILLUSTRATED by sixteen designs, printed on fine paper. A handsome octavo volume.

Price, in cloth, gilt backs,	**$2 00**
" " full gilt,	**2 50**
" In embossed leather, marble edges, gilt backs, &c.,	**2 25**

The world owes much to Luther, and the Reformation of which he was the prominent leader, and nothing, save the pure, simple word of God, will do more towards securing the prevalence and perpetuating the influence of the principles of religious liberty for which he and the other Reformers contended, than the circulation of a book in which the mental processes by which he arrived at his conclusions, are set forth. We can safely recommend this book as one that is worthy of a place in every dwelling, and we hope its circulation may be as wide as its merits are deserving.—*Evangelical Magazine.*

THE LIFE OF PHILIP MELANCHTHON,

THE FRIEND AND COMPANION OF LUTHER, According to his Inner and Outer Life. Translated from the German of Charles Frederick Ledderhose, by the REV. G. F. KROTEL, Pastor of the Trinity Lutheran Church, Lancaster, Pa. With a PORTRAIT of Melanchthon. In one Volume, 12mo. **Price $1 00.**

THE PARABLES OF FRED'K ADOLPHUS KRUMMACHER.

From the seventh German edition. Elegantly ILLUSTRATED by Twenty-six Original Designs, beautifully printed on fine paper. A handsome demy octavo volume.

Elegantly bound in cloth, gilt backs,	**Price $1 75**
" " full gilt sides, backs and edges,	**2 50**
" " Turkey morocco, antique,	**4 00**

The simple and Christian parables of Krummacher, chiefly the productions of his younger years, have acquired a wide popularity, and have long afforded a fund on which our periodicals have freely drawn. In their collected form they have passed through various editions in Germany, but we doubt whether any of them have been so tasteful and beautiful in all their appliances as the one before us. The typography is very chaste, and the illustrations neat and appropriate.—*Presbyterian.*

THE CHRISTIAN'S DAILY DELIGHT.

A SACRED GARLAND, CULLED FROM ENGLISH AND AMERICAN POETS. Beautifully ILLUSTRATED by Eight Engravings on Steel.

In one volume, demy, octavo, cloth, gilt backs,	**Price $1 50**
" " " " full gilt sides, backs and edges,	**2 25**

In this attractive volume we find much to please the eye; but the most valuable recommendation of the work is found in the lessons of piety, virtue, morality, and mercy, which are thrown together in this many-coloured garland of poetic flowers.—*Episcopal Recorder.*

PROCTOR'S HISTORY OF THE CRUSADES
With 154 Illustrations.

HISTORY OF THE CRUSADES,

THEIR RISE, PROGRESS, AND RESULTS. By MAJOR PROCTOR, of the Royal Military Academy.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I. THE FIRST CRUSADE.—Causes of the Crusades—Preaching of the First Crusade—Peter the Hermit—The Crusade undertaken by the People—The Crusade undertaken by the Kings and Nobles—The First Crusaders at Constantinople—The Siege of Nice—Defeat of the Turks—Seizure of Edessa—Siege and Capture of Antioch by the Crusaders—Defence of Antioch by the Crusaders—Siege and Capture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders.

CHAPTER II. THE SECOND CRUSADE.—State of the Latin Kingdom—Origin of the Orders of Religious Chivalry—Fall of Edessa—Preaching of the Second Crusade—Louis VII. and Conrad III. in Palestine.

CHAPTER III. THE THIRD CRUSADE.—The Rise of Saladin—Battle of Tiberias, and Fall of Jerusalem—The Germans undertake the Crusade—Richard Cœur de Lion in Palestine.

CHAPTER IV. THE FOURTH CRUSADE.—The French, Germans, and Italians unite in the Crusade—Affairs of the Eastern Empire—Expedition against Constantinople—Second Siege of Constantinople.

CHAPTER V. THE LAST FOUR CRUSADES.—History of the Latin Empire of the East—The Fifth Crusade—The Sixth Crusade—The Seventh Crusade—The Eighth Crusade.

CHAPTER VI.—CONSEQUENCES OF THE CRUSADES.

At the present time, when a misunderstanding concerning the Holy Places at Jerusalem has given rise to a war involving four of the great Powers of Europe, the mind naturally reverts to the period when nearly all the military powers of Europe made a descent on Palestine for the recovery of them from the possession of the infidels. It would seem that the interest in these places is still alive; and the history of the Holy Wars in Palestine during a considerable portion of the Middle Ages, may be supposed to form an attractive theme for the general reader.

Under this impression Major Proctor's excellent "History of the Crusades" has been carefully revised, some additions made, a series of illustrative engravings, executed by first-rate artists, introduced, and the edition is now respectfully submitted to the public.

The editor, in the performance of his duty, has been struck with the masterly, clear, and lucid method in which the author has executed the work—a work of considerable difficulty, when we consider the long period and the multiplicity of important events embraced in the history; nor has the editor been less impressed with the vigorous style, and the happy power of giving vividness, colour, and thrilling interest to the events which he narrates, so conspicuous in Major Proctor's history. No other historian of the Crusades has succeeded in comprising so complete and entertaining a narrative in so reasonable a compass.

A Handsome Octavo Volume, bound in Cloth, with appropriate Designs, $2 25
" " " elegantly gilt, - - - - - 3 00

LINDSAY AND BLAKISTON

PUBLISH

A MANUAL OF SACRED HISTORY;

OR,

A GUIDE TO THE UNDERSTANDING

Of the Divine Plan of Salvation

ACCORDING TO ITS HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT.

BY

JOHN HENRY KURTZ, D.D.,

PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF DORPAT, ETC.

TRANSLATED FROM THE SIXTH GERMAN EDITION,

BY

CHARLES F. SCHAEFFER, D.D.,

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"A very comprehensive, accurate, and methodical digest of the Sacred History — done with genuine thoroughness and scholarship. There is nothing among our manuals of Biblical History that corresponds with this. It is simple in style, and orthodox in sentiment."—*N. Y. Evangelist.*

"The Observations (introduced by the author) are replete with the results of extensive research—meeting objections and cavils, solving difficulties, explaining obscure passages, reconciling apparent discrepancies, pointing out connections, exposing and rectifying errors, unfolding the nature and design of sacred institutions and ordinances, and showing the relation of events, persons, institutions and prophecies, to the great central fact and theme of Scripture, man's redemption through the incarnate Son." — *Evangelical Review, April,* 1855.

"This is the best book of the kind we have ever examined, and one of the best translations from German into English we have ever seen. The author makes no parade of learning in his book, but his exegetical statements are evidently founded on the most careful, thorough, and extensive study, and can generally be relied upon as among the best results, the most surely ascertained conclusions of modern philological investigation. We by no means hold ourselves responsible for every sentiment in the book, but we cordially recommend it to every minister, to every Sunday school teacher, to every parent, and to every intelligent layman, as a safe and exceedingly instructive guide, through the entire Bible history, the Old Testament and the New. It is a book which actually accomplishes more than its title promises," &c. &c.—(*Andover*) *Bibliotheca Sacra, April,* 1855.

THE CAMP-FIRES OF THE REVOLUTION·

OR, THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE,

ILLUSTRATED BY THRILLING EVENTS AND STORIES BY THE

OLD CONTINENTAL SOLDIERS.

BY HENRY C. WATSON.

With over 50 Illustrations.

CONTENTS.

THE CAMP·FIRES

On Dorchester Heights.
At Cambridge.
At Mount Independence.
At Long Island.
At Skippack Creek.
At Germantown.
At Valley Forge.
At Whitemarsh.
At White Plains.
At Saratoga.
At Middlebrook.
At Middlebrook (Continued).
On the Susquehanna.
At Springfield.
At Morristown.
On the Pedee.
In the Swamp.
On the Hills of Santee.
Near Charleston.

A large Octavo Volume. Price in Cloth Backs, $1 75. Embossed Leather, Marble Edges, $2 00.

This work is well and pleasingly done, and the stories illustrate the oft-repeated quotation that "truth is stranger than fiction." To the young, this work will possess a perfect charm. If it shows how liberty was gained, it may be equally instructive in pointing out its value, and the necessity of its preservation. The style in which it is written is in strict accordance with the boldness of the events and the spirit of the actors.—*American.*

THE RAILROAD AND STEAMBOAT ANECDOTE BOOK;

Containing Numerous Anecdotes, Conversational Opinions, Choice Sayings, etc.,

FROM THE WRITINGS OF

TOM HOOD,
JUDGE HALIBURTON,
CHARLES DICKENS,
WASHINGTON IRVING,
SYDNEY SMITH,
LORD BROUGHAM,

AND OTHER CELEBRATED AUTHORS.

BY AN OLD TRAVELLER.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

A neat 12mo. Volume. Price, Cloth, 50 cents. Paper, 75 cents.

BERNARD BARTON'S LIFE, LETTERS, AND POEMS.

BY HIS DAUGHTER.

WITH A PORTRAIT.

A neat 12mo. Volume.

WATSON'S NEW DICTIONARY of POETICAL QUOTATIONS,

Containing Elegant Extracts on every Subject. Compiled from various sources, and arranged appropriately, by JOHN T. WATSON, M. D.

We view it as a casket filled with the most precious gems of learning and fancy, and so arranged as to fascinate, at a glance, the delicate eye of taste. By referring to the index, which is arranged in alphabetical order, you can find, in a moment. the *best ideas* of the most inspired poets of this country as well as Europe, upon any desired subject.—*Chronicle.*

WELD'S SACRED POETICAL QUOTATIONS;

OR, SCRIPTURE THEMES AND THOUGHTS, as Paraphrased by the Poets Selected and arranged by the REV. H. HASTINGS WELD.

The design was an equally happy and original one, that of collecting the fine moral and religious passages of the poets which are paraphrases of the Scriptures; and the execution of it has obviously involved much labour, as it required the good taste and critical judgment which no one was better qualified than Mr. Weld to bring to the task.—*North American.*

MISS MAY'S AMERICAN FEMALE POETS.

With Biographical and Critical Notices, and Selections from their Writings.

We regard this volume as a proud monument of the genius and cultivation of American women, and we heartily commend it to all our female readers as eminently worthy of their attention.—*Louisville Journal.*

DR. BETHUNE'S BRITISH FEMALE POETS.

With Biographical and Critical Notices, and Selections from their Writings.

As a treasury of nearly all the best pieces from their pens, and as a manifestation of female talent, of woman's imaginative and sensitive excellence, and the influence they exercise over social manners, it is a valuable contribution to English literature. The poems are selected with much judgment and good taste.—*Ledger.*

OCTAVO EDITIONS OF EACH OF THE ABOVE FOR PRESENTATION,

BEAUTIFULLY ILLUSTRATED

Bound in Library Style, Marble Edges,	Price	$2 00
" Cloth, full gilt, bevelled boards,		3 00
" Turkey Morocco, full gilt,		4 00
" " " Antique,		4 50
Also, 12mo. editions of each, in Cloth, gilt backs,		1 25
" " " " full gilt,		1 50

THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIBRARY.

THE WOMEN OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT.

SCENES IN THE LIFE OF THE SAVIOUR.

SCENES IN THE LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS AND PROPHETS.

SCENES IN THE LIVES OF THE APOSTLES.

Neat 12mo. Volumes, with Illustrations. Price per volume, in Cloth, Plain Edges, Gilt Backs, 75 cents. Full Gilt Edges, $1 00. In Setts, Cloth, Plain, $3 00. In Full Gilt, $4 00.

THE CHESTERFIELDIAN LIBRARY.

MANUALS FOR THE POCKET OR CENTRE-TABLE.

THE YOUNG HUSBAND,

A MANUAL OF THE DUTIES, MORAL, RELIGIOUS, AND DOMESTIC, IMPOSED BY THE RELATIONS OF MARRIED LIFE.

THE YOUNG WIFE,

A MANUAL OF MORAL, RELIGIOUS, AND DOMESTIC DUTIES,

BEING A COMPANION TO "THE YOUNG HUSBAND."

ETIQUETTE FOR GENTLEMEN,

OR, SHORT RULES AND REFLECTIONS FOR CONDUCT IN SOCIETY.

ETIQUETTE FOR LADIES,

WITH HINTS ON THE PRESERVATION, IMPROVEMENT, ETC., OF FEMALE BEAUTY.

THE HAND-BOOK OF ETIQUETTE,

OR CANONS OF GOOD BREEDING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ETIQUETTE FOR GENTLEMEN."

JOHNSON'S POCKET DICTIONARY.

A NEW AND REVISED EDITION. WITH A PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR.

Each volume neatly bound in Cloth, Gilt Backs, with an Illuminated Frontispiece. Price 38 cents, or in Full Gilt, 50 cents. In Setts, Cloth, Plain, $2 25; Full Gilt, $3 00.

THE YOUNG LADIES' HOME.

BY MRS. L. C. TUTHILL,

AUTHOR OF "I WILL BE A LADY," "I WILL BE A GENTLEMAN," ETC.

A new and beautiful Edition, enlarged.

A Traveller betwixt life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength and skill,
To warn, to comfort and command;
And yet a spirit still and bright,
With something of an angel light.—*Wordsworth.*

In Cloth, Gilt Backs, 75 cents. In Full Gilt Edges, &c., $1 25.

The object which the intelligent author of this volume has in view, is to awaken the attention of young ladies to the important duties of life which devolve upon them, after they have ceased their scholastic exercises. In doing so, she endeavours to teach them something of the formation of character, and offers them various useful hints for their improvement, mentally and physically: explains to them the station they are to occupy in society, and sets before them in its true light the responsibility they incur by a neglect of their proper duties, in their too eager pursuit of the follies of the day. Such a book cannot fail to be useful, and we hope it may be read extensively.—*Baltimore American.*

THE BROKEN BRACELET,

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY MRS. ESLING, (Late MISS WATERMAN.)

Price in Cloth, Gilt Backs, $1 00.

"They are the poems of the affections, swelling forth from a heart chastened by the discipline of life, sympathizing with all human sorrow, and loving the beautiful in nature and the true in sentiment with unaffected fervour.

TREASURED THOUGHTS FROM FAVOURITE AUTHORS.

BY CAROLINE MAY,

AUTHOR OF THE "AMERICAN FEMALE POETS," ETC.

A neat 12mo. volume. Price $1 00.

In this book all is sound, rational, and improving, calculated to promote delicacy of feeling and loftiness of sentiment, full of good sense and good taste. It is the best treasury of thoughts in the language.—*Christian Intelligencer.*

Containing many Gems of Thought, from writers of the highest celebrity, on themes of permanent interest.—*Observer.*

"Good taste and good judgment make the selections of these excerpts, which convey lessons in morals and wisdom in brief sentences, the best for seizing hold of the understanding, and remaining fixed upon the memory.

FOREST FLOWERS OF THE WEST.

BY MRS. ROBERTS, (Late MISS RICKEY.)

WITH PORTRAIT, ETC.

In Cloth, Gilt Backs, 75 cents. Full Gilt, $1 00.

She possesses a warm, lively fancy, and true poetic feeling: her verse flowing pure and musical as the waters of her own West.—*Bulletin.*

This volume is destined to take its place among the numerous American poetesses whose charming verses expressive of womanly feeling enrich our literature.—*Presbyterian.*

MRS. LEE'S YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIBRARY.

THE AFRICAN CRUSOES;

Or, the ADVENTURES OF CARLOS AND ANTONIO in the Wilds of Africa. With ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE AUSTRALIAN WANDERERS;

Or, the ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN SPENCER, HIS HORSE AND DOG, In the Bush and Wilds of Australia. With ILLUSTRATIONS.

ANECDOTES of the HABITS and INSTINCTS of ANIMALS.

With ILLUSTRATIONS.

ANECDOTES of the HABITS and INSTINCTS of BIRDS, FISHES, and REPTILES.

With ILLUSTRATIONS. Each volume neatly bound in cloth, gilt backs, and sold separately at 75 cents; or neatly put in a box together, price $3 00.

MARY HOWITT'S BEAUTIFUL JUVENILES,

ELEGANTLY ILLUSTRATED.

MIDSUMMER FLOWERS,

FOR THE YOUNG. By MARY HOWITT. With Ten beautiful ILLUSTRATIONS. Price, bound in cloth, gilt backs, 75 cents. In full gilt edges, &c., $1 00.

THE DIAL OF LOVE,

A CHRISTMAS BOOK FOR THE YOUNG. By MARY HOWITT. Ten beautiful ILLUSTRATIONS. Price, bound in cloth, gilt backs, 75 cents; in full cloth, gilt edges, &c., $1 00.

MY NEIGHBOR'S CHILDREN.

From the German. By MRS. SARAH A. MYERS. In 2 volumes, 16mo. With ILLUSTRATIONS. Price $1 25.

A sprightly and very effective tale. It preaches a kind of domestic gospel which every parent will see the beauty of, and perhaps feel the force of. Its impression is both decided and good.—

BT
752

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 013 564 135 2